

THE  
LOST TASMANIAN RACE

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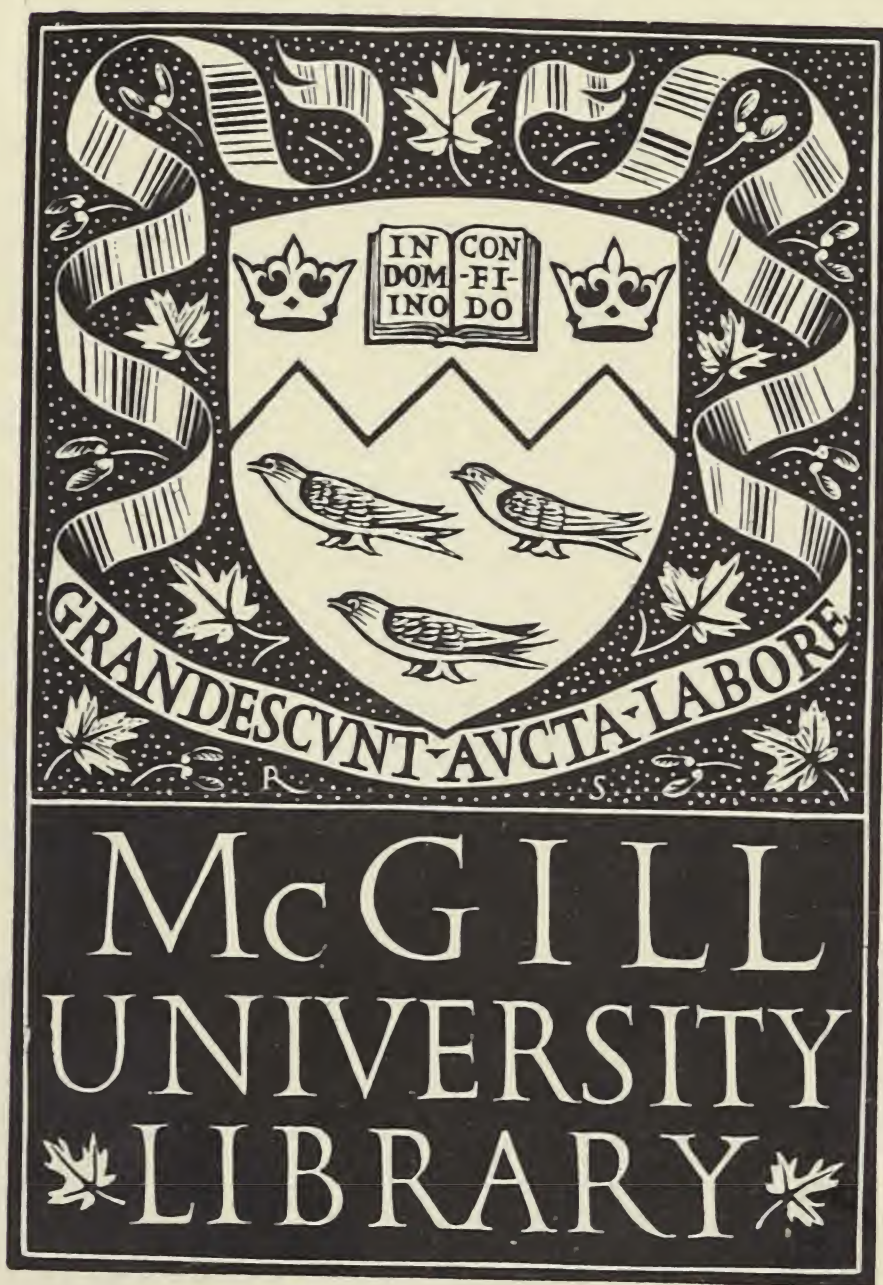
JAMES BONWICK





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*The other works of Mr. Bonwick:—as "Australian Geography," "Western Victoria," &c., are out of print.*



\$35





WOOREDDY, TRUGANINA'S HUSBAND.

*(From MR. DUTERREAU'S portrait.)*



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# THE LOST TASMANIAN RACE.

BY

JAMES BONWICK, F.R.G.S.

FELLOW OF THE LONDON ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE;  
AUTHOR OF "PORT PHILLIP SETTLEMENT," ETC.

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## P R E F A C E.

ANOTHER edition being called for, the Author declined the reproduction of the "Last of the Tasmanians," an expensive work, and preferred, for the popularization of views favouring the claims of Aborigines, to produce, in a simpler form, the leading facts of that sad tale of a Colonial Past. Such is the narrative given in the "Lost Tasmanian Race."

Of late years, great disturbances have occurred in the relations of Whites and Coloured peoples. Zulus, Indians, Bechuanas, Malagasy, Annamese, Australians, Pacific Islanders, Egyptians and Soudanese, have trembled before the might of European civilization. This has been a terrible period of anxiety to all Coloured nations.

Are all *Dark Skins* to perish, like the unhappy Tasmanians, before Europeans? Have we not often been, in our civilizing processes, more savage than the Savages?

If the Natural *Law of Selection* necessitates the destruction of inferior races, as History has illustrated thus far, is there not in Humanity a *Higher Law*, happily better recognized



PREFACE.

in our day, which should and could be employed, by moral force, to resist this fearfully selfish struggle for existence?

Perhaps, in this Colonial record, replies appear to some of these deeply interesting inquiries.

It is, at any rate, hoped that the perusal of these pages may raise up a few more friends for poor Aborigines.

*Sutton, Surrey,*

*April 17th, 1884.*



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# THE LOST TASMANIAN RACE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

AND who were the Tasmanians?

When Tasman, the Dutchman, in 1642, was sailing along the then unknown Southern Ocean, that restlessly surges between Australia and the South Pole, he came upon a rocky, wooded island. This he called *Van Diemen's Land*, since changed to *Tasmania*. The aboriginal Tasmanians believed themselves alone in the world.

Dark in skin, brilliant in eye, with massive jaw, immense teeth, woolly hair, curly beard, bridgeless nose, expanded nostril, scarred body, shapely feet, small hand, they wandered about in scattered tribes.

Except in colour, they were unlike their neighbours of New Holland, now Australia. In hair, in nose, in limb they differed. Both races were wandering hunters, never cultivating land, nor taming bird or beast for food supply. The chase gave no chance of settled habitation or form of government. The wooden pointed spear stayed the kangaroo in its leap, and the whirling stick brought down the winged fowl. The friction of two pieces of wood produced fire, whose embers roasted the food. Without houses, without culinary utensils, without garments, save the raw skin, they had no homes, and needed none.

The lowest down the depths of barbarism, they were neither stupid nor miserable; they were still men and



women. Left alone those thousands of years, never advancing beyond the rudest state, they had sense and feeling. An expansive, and often lofty, forehead betrayed no gorilla look. A language with no ordinary grammatical niceties and complexities proved their human kind. The merry laugh at the evening fire, the ready joke, the boisterous fun, the play of mother and child, made the camp a lively scene. Their wants were few, and easily supplied. With no regrets for past good, and no desire for any future but a fair day's sport, the present only gave them care or brought them joy. Animal pleasure they sought, and found. If, like their changing skies, the sunny smile was quickly followed by the gloomy rage, the cloud of anger soon melted in the azure of peace. A hasty tumult was raised, and then the little tribal gathering raised the song, shook limb in mazy dance, and stirred the forest echoes in a shout of merriment.

If wanting little for the body, they craved less for the soul. With no gods, no form of worship, their vague fears were due only to the wild, dread voices of storm and darkness. The terrible, because unknown, laws of the universe would at times plough up the fallow ground of their sterile souls; but there was no sower to drop a seed of spiritual truth into the gaping furrow. Of the earth earthy, infants of humanity, not even strugglers for the light, content with one day's food and gladness, so they lived, so had their fathers lived.

Another wanderer came, and another claimant for the bounding kangaroo. The Native saw a man, like himself, but white in skin, clothed, and armed with thunder stolen from the skies. The intruder brought mistrust and gloom into those sweet vales and moonlit glades, so long owned by the dark race in careless glee. Henceforth the scene is changed; the men and women find another heaven spread over them.

To tell the tale of sorrows flowing from this arrival, and how the war between the weak and strong brought all-prevailing power to one, but dire extinction to the other, is the object of this present book.



## EARLIEST NOTICES OF THE NATIVES.

THE discoverer of the island, Abel Jansen Tasman, never saw the original inhabitants. He detected notches in trees by which they ascended after birds' nests, as he supposed, after opossums, as we know. He did observe smoke, and heard the noise as of a trumpet. Satisfied with hoisting the Dutch flag, he passed on to the discovery of New Zealand.

A Frenchman, Captain Marion, held the first intercourse with the wild men of the woods. This was in 1772, being 140 years after Tasman's call. Rienzi, the historian, speaks of the kind reception of his countrymen by the Natives, whose children and women were present to greet the strangers. But bloodshed followed the greeting. This is the account:—

“About an hour after the French landed, Captain Marion landed. Advancing in front of him, one of the Aborigines offered him a lighted firebrand, that he might set light to a heap of wood heaped up on the flat shore. Marion took it, believing that it was a formality intended to give confidence to the savages; but hardly had the little pile of wood been enflamed, when the Aborigines retired in mass toward a little height, from which they threw afterwards a volley of stones which wounded the two captains. They (the French) repelled them by several discharges of musket. They killed one aborigine and wounded several others, and the others fled howling towards the woods.”

From another historian of the voyage we learn other particulars. A party of thirty Natives came down, the women carrying their children behind their backs, fastened on with ropes of rushes. The men were said to be carrying pointed sticks (spears) and stone axes. Presents of pieces of iron, looking-glasses, handkerchiefs, &c., were laid before them, but were rejected with sulky disdain. Some ducks and geese were tendered, but were angrily thrown back again. The fire-stick was presented to a sailor first, and afterwards to the captain. But evidently the act, supposed to be friendly, was taken in another spirit. They might have regarded it as a proof that the strangers intended an establishment upon their own hunting-grounds. The historian adds: “This



was no sooner done, than they retired precipitately to a small hill, and threw a shower of stones, by which Captain Marion and the commander of the *Castries* were both wounded." Shots, of course, replied to the stones, and the Frenchmen returned to their boats. Sending their women backward to the covert of the forest, the wild men ran along the shore after their foes. The sailors put back towards the land to arrest the pursuit. At this moment an old chief assumed the leadership, and raised a hideous war-cry, when a storm of spears answered to his call. Fifteen Frenchmen now chased the assailants, and by their destructive fire killed and wounded several of them.

The unfortunate Marion met with his death in New Zealand. Though a French author describes his countrymen as being fattened for thirty-two days, to be eaten on the thirty-third, yet it is known that the New Zealanders treated them well till they polluted their sacred places, cooked food with tapued wood, and put two chiefs in irons. May they not have conducted themselves as ill in Tasmania, so as to incur the displeasure of the Natives, and neglected to note the circumstance in their journal?

Captain Furneaux preceded Captain Cook there nearly four years, but storms drove him off the island. Captain Cook, in the *Adventure*, 1777, saw much of the race on Bruni Isle, and left this record of his observations:—"They were quite naked, and wore no ornaments, unless we consider as such some large punctures in different parts of their bodies, some in straight, and others in curved lines. The men were of the middle stature, but rather slender. Their skin and hair were black, and the latter as woolly as that of any native of Guinea; but they were not distinguished by remarkably thick lips, nor flat noses. On the contrary, their features were far from being disagreeable. They had pretty good eyes, and their teeth were tolerably even, but very dirty. Most of them had their hair and beards smeared with a red ointment, and some had also their faces painted with the same composition. When some bread was offered them, as soon as they understood it was to be eaten, they either returned or threw it away, without tasting it."

A couple of pigs were brought ashore to turn adrift; but the Natives seized them by the ears and carried them off,



doubtless to eat them. A musket was fired, when the party fled in great dismay. But one little girl returned, and brought several females with her. Of these it was remarked that they "wore a kangaroo skin fastened over their shoulders, the only use for which seemed to be to support their children on their backs, for it left those parts uncovered which modesty directs us to conceal. Their bodies were black, and marked with scars like those of the men; from whom, however, they differed, in having their heads shaved—some of them being completely shorn, others only on one side, while the rest of them had the upper part of their heads shaved, leaving a very narrow circle of hair all round. They were far from being handsome; however, some of our gentlemen paid their addresses to them, but without effect. That the gallantry of some of our people was not very agreeable to the men is certain; for an elderly man, as soon as he observed it, ordered the women and children to retire, which they all did, but some with a little reluctance."

Cook was surprised at their indifference to presents, and disregard of iron, fish-hooks, &c. They lived "like beasts of the forest, in roving parties, without arts of any kind, sleeping in summer like dogs, under the hollow sides of trees, or in the wattled huts made with the low branches of evergreen shrubs, stuck in the ground at small distances from each other, and meeting together at the top."

The navigator was struck with the superior virtue of the Tasmanian women over the more polished Polynesians. His remarks upon the conduct of Europeans towards savage women are worthy of citation here. He describes it as "highly blamable, as it creates a jealousy in their men, that may be attended with consequences fatal to the success of the common enterprise, and to the whole body of adventurers, without advancing the private purpose of the individual, or enabling him to gain the object of his wishes. I believe it has been generally found among uncivilized people, that where the women are easy of access, the men are the first to offer them to strangers; and that where this is not the case, neither the allurements of presents, nor the opportunity of privacy, will be likely to have the desired effect. This observation will, I am sure, hold good throughout all the parts of the South Seas where I have been."



But the most important narratives are those in the works of the French naturalists Labillardière and Péron. The former was with Admiral D'Entrecasteaux, in 1792; the latter with Admiral Baudin, in 1802. The first interview is thus described:—

“We got ready a few cartridges as fast as we could, and set out towards the place where we had seen the Natives. It was now only nine o'clock. We had gone only a few steps before we met them. The men and youths were ranged in front, nearly in a semicircle; the women, children, and girls were a few paces behind. As their manner did not appear to indicate any hostile design, I hesitated not to go up to the oldest, who accepted, with a very good grace, a piece of biscuit I offered him, of which he had seen me eat. I then held out my hand to him, as a sign of friendship, and had the pleasure to perceive that he comprehended my meaning very well. He gave me his, inclining himself a little, and raising at the same time the left foot, which he carried backward in proportion as he bent his body forward. These motions were accompanied by a pleasing smile.

“My companions also advanced up to the others, and immediately the best understanding prevailed among us. They received with great joy the neckcloths which we offered them. The young people approached nearer to us, and one of them had the generosity to give me a few small shells of the whelk kind, pierced near the middle, and strung like a necklace. This ornament, which he called *Canlaride*, was the only one he possessed, and he wore it round his head. A handkerchief supplied the place of this present, gratifying the utmost wishes of my savage, who advanced towards me that I might tie it round his head for him, and who expressed the greatest joy as he lifted his hand up to feel it again and again. We wore abundance of clothes, as I have already observed, on account of the coldness of the nights; and we bestowed the greater part on these islanders.

“The women were very desirous of coming nearer to us; and though the men made signs to them to keep at a distance, their curiosity was ready every moment to break through all other considerations. The gradual increase of confidence, however, that took place, obtained them permission to approach. It appeared to us very astonishing that in so



high a latitude, where, at a period of the year so little advanced as the present, we experienced the cold at night to be pretty severe, these people did not feel the necessity of clothing themselves. Even the women were, for the most part, entirely naked, as well as the men. Some of them only had the shoulders or part of the back covered with a kangaroo's skin, worn with the hair next the body; and amongst these we saw two, each of whom had an infant at the breast. The sole garment of one was a strip of kangaroo skin, about two inches broad, which was wrapped six or seven times round the waist. Another had a collar of skin round the neck, and some had a slender cord bound several times round the head. I afterwards learned that most of these cords were fabricated from the bark of a shrub of the Spurge family, very common in this country.

“I had given them several things without requiring anything in return; but I wished to get a kangaroo's skin, when, among the savages about us, there happened to be only a young girl who had one. When I proposed to her to give it me in exchange for a pair of pantaloons, she ran away to hide herself in the woods. The other Natives appeared truly hurt at her refusal, and called to her several times. At length she yielded to their entreaties, and came to bring me the skin. Perhaps it was from timidity only she could not prevail on herself to part with this kind of garment; in return for which she received a pair of pantaloons, less useful to her, according to the customs of ladies in this country, than the skin, which served to cover the shoulders. We showed her the manner of wearing them; but, notwithstanding, it was necessary for us to put them on for her ourselves. To this she yielded with the best grace in the world.”

In that party were seven men, eight women, and seven children. Of course the French sailors tried the earliest known process of civilizing savages,—*a taste of grog*. But the stuff was promptly rejected by the unsophisticated palate. The merry Frenchmen, however, got the girls together, and induced them to run races with each other. An attempt at any improper freedom was resisted at once, though in a good-tempered way. One girl, more rudely assaulted, fled to a rock overhanging the sea, prepared to throw herself down if her pursuer advanced further.



In 1798 Flinders and Bass fell in with the Natives by the river Derwent. As it was in consequence of a report of this visit that the island became colonized by the English Government,—the first step to the extinction of the aboriginal inhabitants,—it is interesting to read the particulars as told by Captain Collins, afterwards appointed to be the founder of the colony at Hobart Town.

After speaking of the run of the *Norfolk* up the beautiful river, he proceeds in these words: "In their way up, a human voice saluted them from the hills; on which they landed, carrying with them one of several swans which they had just shot. Having nearly reached the summit, two females, with a short covering hanging loose from their shoulders, suddenly appeared at some little distance before them; but, snatching up each a small basket, these scampered off. A man then presented himself, and suffered them to approach him without any signs of fear or distrust. He received the swan joyously, appearing to esteem it a treasure.

"His language was unintelligible to them, as was theirs to him, although they addressed him in several of the dialects of New South Wales, and some few of the most common words of the South Sea Islands. With some difficulty they made him comprehend their wish to see his place of residence. He pointed over the hill, and proceeded onwards; but his pace was slow and wandering, and he often stopped under pretence that he had lost the track, which led them to suspect that his only aim was to amuse and tire them out. Judging, then, that in persisting to follow him they must lose the remaining part of the flood-tide, which was much more valuable to them than the sight of his hut could be, they parted from him in great friendship. The most probable reason of his unwillingness to be their guide, seemed to be his fearing that if he took them to his women their charms might induce them to run off with them—a jealousy very common with the natives of the continent.

"He was a short, slight man, of middle age, with a countenance more expressive of benignity and intelligence, than of the ferocity or stupidity which generally characterized the other Natives; and his features were less flattened, or negro-like, than theirs. His face was blackened, and the top of his head was plastered with red earth. His hair was



either naturally short and close, or had been rendered so by burning, and, although short and stiffly curled, they did not think it woolly. He was armed with two spears, very ill-made, of solid wood. No part of their dress attracted his attention, except the red silk handkerchiefs round their necks. Their fire-arms were to them neither objects of curiosity nor fear."

But by far the most pleasing stories are told by M. Péron. Romantic they certainly are, as should be expected in an age blessed with the sentimentalities of Rousseau. The air of extravagance and invention is unmistakable. The description must be accepted as the portraits taken on that occasion; sketches and narratives were but approximations of truth. Both were uncommonly French-like. Even the figures drawn have a touch of the Parisian about them. We hasten to present scenes in the language of the amiable naturalist.

"To the signs of friendship which we made, one of them precipitated himself from the top of a rock, rather than descended it, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the midst of us. He was a young man, of from twenty-two to twenty-four years of age, of an apparently strong constitution, having no other defect than a slenderness of legs and arms, which characterizes his nation. His physiognomy exhibited neither austerity nor ferocity; his eyes were quick and sparkling, and his looks expressed at once benevolence and surprise. M. Freycinet having embraced him, I did the same. But the air of indifference with which he welcomed this evidence of our interest made it easy to observe that it had no signification for him. (The Frenchmen discovered that kissing was a social mystery to these rude barbarians.) That which appeared to affect him more was the whiteness of our skin. Wishing to assure himself, without doubt, if that colour were the same all over the body, he opened our waistcoats and shirts, and his astonishment was manifested by loud cries of surprise, and above all by extremely quick stamping of the feet.

"Yet our cutter appeared to occupy him more than our persons, and, after having gazed a few moments, he rushed down to the landing-place. There, without disturbing himself about the sailors whom he found there, he seemed quite



absorbed in his new observation. The thickness of the ribs and panels, the solidity of its construction, its rudder, its oars, its masts, its sails, he observed with all that silence and that profound attention which are the least equivocal signs of a reflective interest and admiration. In a moment one of the sailors, wishing without doubt to add to his surprise, presented him with a wine bottle filled with the grog which formed a part of the rations of the ship. The brightness of the glass called forth a cry of astonishment from the savage, who took the bottle and examined it for some moments; but soon his curiosity being led again to the vessel, he threw the bottle into the sea, without appearing to have any other intention than to relieve himself of an indifferent object, and afterwards went to his first research. Neither the cry of the sailor, who was troubled at the loss of his bottle of grog, nor the entreaty of one of his comrades to throw himself into the water to catch it, appeared to move him. He made several attempts to push the cutter free, but the cable which held it attached rendering all his efforts powerless, he was constrained to abandon it and return to join us, after having given us the most striking example that we had had of the attention and reflection in savage people."

We have then a passage worthy of Rousseau himself. A family group present themselves :—

"The old man, after having examined both of us with as much surprise and satisfaction as the first, made signs to two women, who had hitherto been unwilling to approach. They hesitated some moments, after which the elder came to us. The younger followed her, more timid and fearful than the first. The one appeared to be forty years old, and large furrows upon the skin of the abdomen announced, not to be mistaken, that she had been the mother of several children. She was absolutely naked, and appeared, like the old man, kind and benevolent. The young woman, of from twenty-six to twenty-eight years, was of a pretty robust constitution; like the preceding, she was entirely naked, with the exception of a kangaroo skin, in which she carried a little girl, whom she still suckled. Her breasts, a little withered already, appeared otherwise pretty well formed, and sufficiently furnished with milk. This young woman, like the





MOTHER AND CHILD.

(Péron's Voyage)







elderly man and woman, whom we presumed to be her father and mother, had an interesting physiognomy. Her eyes had expression, and something of the *spirituel* which surprised us, and which since then we have never found in any other female of that nation. She appeared, also, to cherish her child much; and her care for her had that affectionate and gentle character which is exhibited among all races as the particular attribute of maternal tenderness."

Another family group excited the most romantic ravings of our French explorers. These consisted of a father and mother, a young man, a little boy about five years old, a girl of younger years, and a *belle sauvage* of sixteen or seventeen. Upon making acquaintance with this distinguished party, Péron, like a true man of gallantry, drew off his glove, while bowing to the beauty, preparatory to his offering the salutation of refined society. The fair one of the forest was struck with horror and alarm at the facility with which her admirer apparently peeled off his skin, and was not easily relieved of her fears for his safety. The old man, in primitive simplicity, invited the visitors to his evening meal of cockles and mussels. Péron sang, for his supper, the Marseillaise Hymn. The effect he describes: "The young man tore his hair, scratched his head with both hands, agitated himself in a hundred different ways, and repeatedly iterated his approving clamour." Other and more tender airs followed, which doubtless touched the tender chords of the young lady. Let us hear his tale of this gentle one:—

"The young girl whom I have noticed made herself more and more conspicuous every instant, by the softness of her looks, and their affectionate and sparkling expression. Ourâ Ourâ, like her parents, was perfectly naked, and appeared little to suspect that one should find in that absolute nudity anything immodest or indecent. Of a weaker constitution than her little brother and sister, she was more lively and impassioned than they. M. Freycinet, who seated himself beside her, appeared to be more particularly the object of her agreeable attentions, and the least experienced eye might have been able, in the look of this innocent child of nature, to distinguish that delicate shadow which gives to simple playfulness a more serious and reflective character. Coquetry appeared to be called forth to the support of natural attractions.



Ourâ Ourâ made us know for the first time the nature of the rouge of these regions, and the details of its application. After having put some charcoal in my hands, she crushed it, and reduced it to very fine powder; then keeping this dust in the left hand, she took some with the right, and rubbing at first the forehead, then the two cheeks, in an instant was frightfully black: that which above all appeared singular to us was the complacency with which the young girl looked at us after the operation, and the air of confidence which this new ornament had spread upon her features. Thus, then, the sentiment of coquetry, the taste for ornament, are wants, so to speak, innate in the heart of woman."

Their interest in the children was creditable to the good feelings of the Frenchmen. The little ones pleased them, and led to the philosophical remark, that "uniting our particular observations to those of the most celebrated travellers, we deduced therefrom the important consequence, that the character of the woman and the child is very much independent of that of the man, of the influence of climate, the perfectioning of social order, and the empire of physical wants."

M. Péron then proceeds to describe a little bit of vanity on the other side. "Ourâ Ourâ carried a reed bag, of an elegant and singular construction, which I much desired to obtain. As this young girl evidenced for me some more amicable distinctions, I ventured to ask for her little bag. Immediately, and without hesitation, she put it into my hand, accompanying the present with an obliging smile and some affectionate phrases, which I regretted not being able to understand." The gallant gave her a handkerchief and a tomahawk in return; but upon M. Breton bestowing a long red feather, "she leaped for joy. She called her father and her brothers. She cried, she laughed; in a word, she seemed intoxicated with pleasure and happiness."

But the dearest friends must part. The gentlemen prepared for the loneliness of shipboard, grieving to resign the delights of Arcadian simplicity, and the pure pleasures of aboriginal innocence. Yet our natives were too polite to permit their guests to depart unattended. The civilities of ordinary civilization were not wanting.

"M. Freycinet gave his arm to Ourâ Ourâ; the old man



was my mate. Our way lay amidst briars and underwood, and our poor savages, being wholly naked, suffered greatly. Ourâ Ourâ, in particular, was sadly scratched. But heedless of this, she boldly made her way through the thicket, chattering with Freycinet, and vexed at her inability to make herself understood; at the same time accompanying her discourse with sportive wiles and smiles, so gracious and expressive, that the most finished coquetry could not have rendered them more so."

How affecting must have been the parting! The Frenchmen entered their boats in profound despondency. The feeling was reciprocated; for "the Natives manifested their sorrow in the most affecting manner." The kind naturalist adds, "Our good Diemenese did not leave us for an instant; and when we pushed off, their grief showed itself in the most touching manner. They made signs to return to see them." They even lighted a large fire upon a neighbouring hill, that, when the winds had driven the vessel miles away, the column of smoke might indicate a spot so sacred to peace and friendship. No wonder that poor Péron, thoroughly smitten, closes that day's journal with these words: "The whole of what I have related is minutely exact; and assuredly it were difficult to resist the soft emotion which similar incidents inspire."

Now, alas! truth demands that we reverse the shield. A boat's crew landed on Bruni Island. On this occasion they encountered no Ourâ Ourâ. A fine athletic fellow had been showing off his powers, when a French midshipman engaged him in a wrestling match, and with superior science threw him. The sulky rascal got up, and threw a spear at the victor. Another time Messrs. Petit, Leschenault, and Hamelin went ashore at Bruni. Petit, an artist, began taking likenesses of the Natives present. This liberty was resented by one man, who rushed forward to seize the portraits, which were saved from the Goth with difficulty. Blows were struck on both sides, and a shower of stones closed the *entente cordiale*. The practical Leschenault has left us this expression of his opinion: "I am surprised to hear persons of sense still affirm that man in a natural state is not of a bad disposition, but worthy of confidence." Had Péron received a stone at his head, instead of a basket from



pretty Ourâ, his views might have approximated to those of his brother naturalist.

Let us hear another tale from M. Péron. While wandering among the Bush flowers of Tasmania, and admiring the sylvan charms of that Isle of Beauty, he encountered a company of Diana's forest maidens, to whom, in the distance, the French officers waved their handkerchiefs.

"At these demonstrations of friendship the troop hesitated an instant, then stopped, and resolved to wait for us. It was then that we recognized that we had the company of women; there was not a male individual with them. We were disposed to join them nearer, when one of the oldest among them, disengaging herself from her companions, made signs for us to stop and sit down, crying out loudly to us, *mèdi, mèdi* (sit down, sit down). She seemed also to ask us to lay down our arms, the view of which alarmed her. These preliminary conditions having been complied with, the women squatted upon their heels, and from that moment abandoned themselves without reserve to the vivacity of their character, speaking all together, questioning us all at once, making, in a word, a thousand gestures, a thousand contortions as singular as varied. M. Bellefin (doctor) began to sing, accompanying himself with very lively and animated gestures. The women kept silence, observing with much attention the gestures of M. Bellefin, as if by them to interpret his singing. Hardly had one couplet been completed, when some of them applauded with loud cries, others laughed to the echo, whilst the young girls, more timid without doubt, kept silence, evidencing nevertheless, by their movements and by the expression of their physiognomy, their surprise and their satisfaction.

"All the women, with the exception of kangaroo skins which some of them carried upon their shoulders, were perfectly naked; but, without appearing to think anything of their nudity, they so varied their attitudes and their postures, that it would be difficult to describe the *bizarre* and the picturesque effects presented to us by that meeting. Their skin, black and disgusting with the fat of seals; their hair, short, crisp, black and dirty, reddened in some with the dust of ochre; their figures, all bedaubed with charcoal; their forms, generally thin and faded; their breasts, long and



pendant—in a word, all the details of their physical constitution were repulsive. We must always exempt from this general tableau two or three young girls of from fifteen to sixteen years, in whom we distinguished forms agreeable enough, contours sufficiently graceful, and in whom the breast was firm and well placed, although the nipple was a little too large and too long. These young girls had also something in the expression of their features the most ingenuous, the most affectionate, and the most gentle, as if the better qualities of the soul could exist even in the midst of the savage hordes of the human species, the more particular gift of youth, of grace, and of beauty.

“Among the more aged females, some had a gross and ignoble figure; others, much fewer in number, had a fierce and sombre look; but, in general, one remarked in all I know not what of inquietude and depression, which misfortune and slavery imprint on the features of all beings who bear the yoke. Almost all were covered with scars, sad fruits of ill-treatment from their ferocious husbands. One only, in the midst of all her companions, had preserved a dignified aspect, with much enjoyment and joviality; it was she who had imposed the conditions of which I have spoken before. After M. Bellefin had ended his song, she began to mimic with her gestures and her tone of voice in a very original and pleasant manner, which much diverted her companions. Then she began to sing herself in so rapid a way, that it would be difficult to apply such music to the ordinary principles of our own. Their song, nevertheless, is here in accordance with their language, for such is the volubility of speech in these people, that it is impossible, as we shall elsewhere show, to distinguish any precise sound in their pronunciation: it is a sort of trilling sentiment, for which we cannot find any terms of comparison or analogy in our European languages.

“Excited, so to speak, by her own singing, which we had not failed to applaud with warmth, and wishing, without doubt, to deserve our suffrages on other accounts, our jovial Diemenese commenced to execute various dance movements, some of which would have been regarded as excessively indecent, if that state of human society were not foreign to all that delicacy of sentiment and action which is for



us but a fortunate product of the perfection of social order.

"Whilst all this passed, I employed myself accurately to collect and note the details that were presented, and which I now describe. It was remarked, doubtless, by the same woman who was dancing; for hardly had she finished her dance, than she approached me with an obliging air, took from a reed bag, similar to that I have described elsewhere, some charcoal which she found there, crushed it in her hand, and began to lay on me a plaster of the rouge of those regions. I willingly lent myself to this obliging caprice. M. Heirisson had the same complacency, and received a similar mask. We appeared to be then a great object of admiration to these women; they seemed to regard us with a sweet satisfaction, and to felicitate us upon the new adornments which we had just acquired."

This led our traveller to another philosophical remark, founded upon his new experience: "Thus, then, that European whiteness of which our species is so proud is no other than a real defect, a sort of deformity which ought to be resigned in these remote climes to the black colour of charcoal, to the sombre red of ochre, or fuller's earth." It might be reasonably supposed that such polite acquiescence to the wishes of these sable charmers would have moved them to permit of some playful return on the part of the fun-loving Frenchmen, especially when rendered so attractive by the hand of the lovely Arra Maida. But, alas! in their timidity or coldness they were true nymphs of the chaste Diana.

"The deference which we paid to these women, and perhaps also the new charms which we owed to their attentions, seemed to add to their kindness, to their confidence in us, but nothing could induce them, however, to allow themselves to be approached nearer. The least movement which we made, or appeared to make, to pass the prescribed line, caused them to spring up from their heels, and take to flight. Any longer to enjoy their presence, we were constrained to conform ourselves entirely to their wishes. After having lavished upon them presents and caresses, we considered it proper to retake our route toward the anchorage, and our Diemenese appearing to have the intention of walking the same way as ourselves, the two companies left. But we were again obliged to



come to terms with these inexorable women, who condemned us to follow the shore, while they walked upon the sand-hills parallel to it."

The gentlemen were doubtless not used to such prudery in the *salons* of Paris. But our next extract exhibits a more prosaic sequel to this romantic adventure:—

"As they were returning from fishing when we perceived them, they were laden with large crabs, lobsters, and different shell-fish grilled upon ashes, which they carried in baskets of reed. These baskets were tied round in front by a circle of cord, and hung behind the back; some of these were very heavy, and we very sincerely pitied these poor women, carrying such burdens.

"Our journey all the while was not less gay than our interview, and from the top of the sand-hills they sent us many pleasantries, many playful compliments, to which we endeavoured to reply as expressively as it was possible. Without doubt we should have continued for a much longer time these innocent amusements, when all at once one of the women uttered a great cry, and all the others repeated it with fright. They had discovered our landing-place and our comrades. We sought to calm their excitement, assuring them that so far from experiencing any injury from our friends, they were going to receive new gifts. All was in vain, and already the troop were burying themselves in the forest, when the same woman who, almost alone, had made our interview so agreeable, seemed to change her mind. At her voice there was a moment of hesitation; but not being able, as it appeared to us, to induce them to follow her, she threw herself alone from the top of the sand-hill, and walking upon the shore some distance before us with much confidence, and even with a sort of pride, she seemed to deride the timidity of her companions. The others, in their turn, appeared ashamed of their weakness; little by little their courage increased, until at length they decided to return to the beach. Accompanied by this numerous and singular escort, we arrived at the place of embarkation, near which, by an accident no one could foresee, all the husbands of these poor women had been gathered together for some time." What followed?

"In spite of the least equivocal evidence of the benevolence and generosity of our countrymen, they exhibited a restless



and sombre physiognomy, and their look was ferocious and threatening, and in their attitude we distinguished a constraint, malevolence, and perfidy which they sought to dissemble in vain. At this inauspicious meeting, all the women who followed us appeared much concerned. Their furious husbands cast upon them glances of anger and rage, which were not likely to comfort them. After having laid the products of their fishing at the feet of these men, who partook of them immediately, without offering them any, they retired behind their husbands, and seated themselves upon the other side of a large sand-hill, and there, during the rest of our interview, these unfortunate creatures dared neither raise their eyes, nor speak, nor smile."

After this unfortunate termination of a happy meeting, our voyagers took their departure. But the effect of the visit upon the susceptible nature of the naturalist is recognized in the closing words of his journal:—

"Thus ended our interview with the inhabitants of Diemen's Land. All the descriptions which I have given are of the most rigorous exactitude, and without doubt it would have been difficult to deny oneself the sweet emotions which similar circumstances ought to inspire. This gentle confidence of the people in us, these affectionate evidences of benevolence which they never ceased to manifest toward us, the sincerity of their demonstrations, the frankness of their manners, the touching ingenuousness of their caresses, all concurred to excite within us sentiments of the tenderest interest. The intimate union of the different individuals of a family, the sort of patriarchal life of which we had been spectators, had strongly moved us. I saw with an inexpressible pleasure the realization of those brilliant descriptions of the happiness and simplicity of the state of nature of which I had so many times in reading felt the seductive charm."

Such were the sentiments entertained of a people, almost universally regarded by English colonists, a few years later, as tigers and demons, whose destruction would be a deed of merit, as well as an act of necessity. Smile as we may at the simplicity of Péron, had our faith in the poor creatures been more like that of the kind-hearted Frenchman, the reader might have been spared the story of the crimes and horrors attending the history of "The Lost Tasmanian Race."





TASMANIAN WOMAN.

(Péron's *Aria Maida*.)



TASMANIAN.

(Péron's *Grou-Agara*.)







## THE RACE UNDER BRITISH RULE.

Whatever sorrows arose from the mixture of Whites and Blacks in the little island, it cannot be affirmed that Government was ignorant of the usual effects of such an intercourse, nor unmindful of the duty incumbent on the State to protect the aboriginal inhabitants. Warned by the consequences of such neglect on the mainland of New Holland, and shocked at the cries reaching England from the shores of New South Wales, Lord Hobart, then Secretary for the Colonies, sent this despatch to Captain Collins, when undertaking, at the close of 1803, to form a settlement on the banks of the Derwent.

"You are to endeavour," wrote he, "by every means in your power, to open an intercourse with the Natives, and to conciliate their good-will, enjoining all parties under your government to live in amity and kindness with them; and if any person shall exercise any acts of violence against them, or shall wantonly give them any interruption in the exercise of their several occupations, you are to cause such offender to be brought to punishment, according to the degree of the offence."

But before the first Governor of Van Diemen's Land established his quarters at Hobart Town, the unhappy collision between the Whites and the Blacks had taken place by the river Derwent.

A party had been sent down from Sydney just before the arrival of Collins from the abortive attempt to settle Port Phillip. Camping at *Restdown*, afterwards Risdon, five miles from Hobart, it was there, early in 1804, that the unfortunate event took place that ushers in the sad story of the "Black War." A little tide creek flows into the Derwent, not far from the Risdon farm. The sandstone ranges rapidly ascend from the water's edge, while vast masses of palæozoic limestone in the neighbourhood rest as heavy buttresses by the river. This was the site of the massacre.

The story of the first conflict of races in Tasmania is involved in misty obscurity. To exhibit this difficulty of writing history, we need only to refer to the diary of the first colonial chaplain, the Rev. Robert Knopwood, who was only a few miles from the scene of war, who inquired into it of



the very parties concerned in it, and who was accustomed to enter each day's occurrences in his journal. And yet all he could get to enter was the following: "Had heard different opinions—that they wanted to encamp on the site of Burke's hut, half a mile from the camp, and ill-used his wife—that the hut was not burnt or plundered—that the Natives did not attack the camp—that our people went from the camp to attack the Natives, who remained at Burke's house."

All we positively know is that one day there appeared on the heights a large body of the Aborigines, and not very far from the spot where Bass and Flinders held friendly parley with one of the tribe; so that there was no reason to suspect hostile intentions. Women and children were there. The officer in command ordered the soldiers with him to fire upon the advancing hunters, and numbers were slain.

One person states that the event took place while the Lieutenant-Governor Bowen was on a tour, and that the Natives came down the hill shouting and singing, in full pursuit of some kangaroos. Another eye-witness mentions the fact of the man Burke, living just outside of the camp, running in great alarm with his wife to the soldiers, at the sight of the five hundred Blacks, whose women and children were with them. It is well known that when a savage people contemplate mischief they invariably send their women to the rear. Thus, then, we have a guarantee of their peaceable intentions. The same evidence records the death of, at least, fifty of various ages and of both sexes. There is, also, the assertion that the people came on in a semicircle down the hill, with loud cries, driving the kangaroos into a bottom, where they could be easier caught and destroyed.

The Aborigines' Committee, a body of gentlemen appointed by the benevolent Governor Arthur to watch over the interests of that unhappy people at the time of the Black War, when engaged in an investigation as to the causes producing the hostility of the dark race, took certain evidence which bore upon this historical question. One Edward White, who had been servant to W. Clark, and who had erected the rude hut or house inhabited by the commanding-officer, Lieutenant Bowen, stated before the Committee that, on the 3rd of May, 1804, he was engaged hoeing some ground near the creek at Risdon, when looking up at the shouting, he saw about three



hundred Natives coming down the Tiers in a circle, men, women, and children, with a flock of kangaroos between them. He then declared:—

“They looked at me with all their eyes. I went down to the creek, and reported them to some soldiers, and then went back to my work. The Natives did not threaten me. I was not afraid of them. Clark’s house was near where I was at work, and Burke’s house near Clark’s house. The Natives did not attack the soldiers. They could not have molested them. The firing commenced about eleven o’clock. There were many of the Natives slaughtered and wounded. I don’t know how many. Some of their bones were sent in two casks to Port Jackson by Dr. Mountgarrett. They went in the *Ocean*. A boy was taken from them. This was three or four months after we landed. They never came so close again afterwards. They had no spears with them—only waddies. They were hunting, and came down into a bottom.”

Another witness, Robert Evans, belonging to the Risdon party, was examined by the Committee. He was not present at the time, though on the ground immediately afterwards, and learned the news. He was told then that when they came on in a large body they did not make any attack, but they brought a great number of kangaroos with them for a corrobory. He never heard that they interrupted any one, but that they were fired upon. He did not know who ordered them to be fired upon, or how many were said to have been killed, though he had heard that there were men, women, and children, and that some were killed, and that some children were taken away.

One of my own informants, a settler of 1804, said that the officer, Lieutenant Moore, saw double that morning from an over-dose of rations’ rum. Several have assured me of the good feeling between the two races before that event. The reputation which the soldiers of the New South Wales corps, afterwards the 102nd Regiment, earned for drinking propensities, and their officers for spirit-dealing, in the primitive times, led some to think that the whole was the effect of a half-drunken spree, and that the firing arose from a brutal desire to see the *Niggers* run.

That excellent story-teller, Captain Holman, the Blind Traveller round the world, who made such capital use of



the eyes of other people, has left us a statement he learned in 1831, when on a visit to Mr. Gregson, the veteran Tasmanian Reformer. The Blind Traveller heard the story on the identical spot of the massacre (for Mr. Gregson's house was at Risdon), and thus narrates it:—

“It is said to have originated in the following manner. A small stone house had been erected for a gardener, and he was commencing the cultivation of the ground immediately around it. In the midst of his work one day, he was surprised at the appearance of some Natives advancing towards him, and ran off much frightened to the camp to give the alarm. Lieutenant Moore, who commanded a party of the 102nd, drew up his men to resist the expected attack; and, on the approach of the Natives, the soldiers were ordered to fire upon them. The execution this volley did among them, and their ignorance of the nature of fire-arms, terrified them to such a degree that they fled, without attempting the slightest defence. From this moment a deep-rooted hatred for the strangers sprang up among them, and all endeavours to subdue it had hitherto proved ineffectual.”

When I was once in Sydney, exploring dusty receptacles of officialdom, and examining the early literature of New South Wales, for facts connected with colonial history, I met with some remarkable paragraphs in the *Sydney Gazette*, the parent of the Australian Press, which commenced its being in 1803. The earliest, appearing in the paper of March 18, 1804, is particularly interesting, as giving us the first notice of the state and feeling of the Tasmanians at the landing of the Derwent party from Sydney, and before the terrible day of slaughter. The *Lady Nelson* had conveyed Lieutenant Bowen and his company to Risdon, and brought the earliest intelligence of their progress upon its return to Sydney. The little craft did much colonial service; having been the first to enter the Heads of Port Phillip, the first to colonize Southern Tasmania, and subsequently the convoy of some of Captain Collins' Port Phillip party to the shores of the Derwent. This is the report it brought:—

“The Natives are very numerous, and undaunted even at the explosion of a musket; but were *very friendly* to small



parties they meet accidentally, though they cannot be prevailed on to visit the encampment. During the *Lady Nelson's* stay a large kangaroo was taken in the woods by Henry Hacking, attended by a Sydney native; but being interrupted by a tribe of the sooty inhabitants of the neighbourhood, the kangaroo, being fifty or sixty pounds' weight, was, for a moment, considered as lost. The blacks made use of every policy to wheedle Hacking out of his booty; but, as they did not offer or threaten violence, he, with counteracting policy, preserved it. Although they treated him with much affability and POLITENESS, yet they regarded his companion with jealousy and indignation; and the poor fellow, sensible of his critical and precarious situation, appeared very thankful when safely delivered from their unwelcome presence."

Such a story as this leaves the military without excuse for their barbarous onslaught upon the Natives at Risdon. They must have known by all experience that, though too shy to approach the camp,—or rather too fearful to place themselves and wives within reach of an armed soldiery,—they were gentle in their manners, under circumstances where numbers and forest freedom give confidence, if not audacity. The Sydney printer may well put the word "politeness" in small capitals. No wonder the Tasmanians were jealous of the stranger from New Holland, and indignant that a Black should appear in their presence with two front teeth knocked out, with an improper escutcheon of cicatrices, and with flowing hair, instead of the approved crisp and corkscrew ringlets.

A letter from Port Dalrymple, afterwards Launceston, appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* on the 23rd of December, 1804:—

"On the 14th (November), one of our small parties in the brush was surprised at the appearance of the first body of Natives seen; and they, with a hideous shout, expressed an astonishment scarcely to be conceived at the sight of visitants so opposite to themselves in habit and complexion. About two hundred approaching our small party with impetuous fury, they prudently retired, and were pursued into camp, near which the Natives were prevailed upon to enter into a parley. Signs were made of a friendly disposition



toward them, and, appearing to gather confidence, they accepted trifling presents, expressing extreme surprise at every object that occasionally attracted their attention; but their apparent reciprocal inclination to a friendly understanding was now and then interrupted by an indignant clamour, which, beginning with a single individual, ran rapidly through the *lines*, accompanied with gesticulations menacing and ferocious, at the same time biting their arms as a token either of vengeance or defiance. They afterwards peaceably withdrew, having from us experienced no other than a courteous and conciliatory treatment; but were positive in forbidding us to follow them."

All honour to the settlers of Port Dalrymple! Unlike the soldiers of Risdon, they, a small party in the *brush*, were not alarmed at the presence of two hundred real "wild men of the woods," but, while retiring, enticed the savages to a conference, and trembled not to hear their war-shout, or see their spear rasping. They gave presents and kind words, instead of oaths and musketry. This was a real victory, and gave the little northern settlement repose, when other places witnessed fire and blood. Twenty years after this, the women walked to the Basin, above the Falls of Launceston, and carried on in peace their laundry operations, while the naked spearmen of the forest looked down curiously upon them from the basaltic wood-crowned heights.

A venerable lady, who came to Hobart Town in 1804, with her parents, the first free settlers of the first fleet, gave me much interesting information of her early days. She had heard people express their fears of the wild Blacks, and her mother gave her a caution about venturing far into the Bush, because she might be killed and eaten by the cannibals. At that time the family lived on their farm about three miles from town. A bold and enterprising child, she had long wished to have a nearer gaze at the magnificent Mount Wellington, whose snowy cap had often won her admiration. Prevailing on her little brother to accompany her, she set off one day while her parents were absent, and trudged through the Bush till she was lost amidst the dense foliage of the mountain gullies. There she fell in with some Aborigines. The spirited lassie exhibited no alarm, and found herself kindly treated by the sable throng. She



furthermore told me that when a girl she had often met them in the Camp, as Hobart Town was then called, and that they were always quiet and well conducted.

I regret to say that, though I have been much favoured in my researches among the old records of Tasmania, especially by the late Mr. Bicheno, Colonial Secretary under Governor Franklin, and afterwards by the Premier, Sir Richard Dry, I was so unfortunate as to discover no papers relative to the first six years of the settlement. The story goes, that upon the sudden decease of the first governor, Captain Collins being found dead in his chair, two of the leading officers of the Government placed a marine outside the door, so that they might be undisturbed, and then proceeded to burn every document in the office!!! Although I subsequently knew one of these gentlemen, it was not likely I should learn from himself the correctness of the report, any more than the motive for such vandalism.

But I take this opportunity of acknowledging my gratitude to Mr. Hull, Clerk of the Tasmanian Council, and son of my old and esteemed neighbour, Mr. Commissary Hull, through whose kindness I got access to the only remaining early document, and for the disentanglement of which record he is to be credited. This was the *Muster Book* of 1810, &c., kept at the barracks, in which the commanding officer entered the countersign of the day, and in which, also, occasional notices of the day's proceedings were written. The previous Muster Books, doubtless conveyed for safety to the Governor's office, have all disappeared; they probably added to the conflagration on that one dark night of destruction.

In this interesting memorandum-book is an entry, on January 29th, 1810, of a Government Order bearing upon our subject. It exhibits the commencement of the "Black War," and marks the sentiments of the authorities as to its origin, and their resolution to protect the poor creatures who were the objects of civilized cruelty. The *Order* is the following:—

"There being great reason to fear that William Russell and George Gellay will be added to the number of unfortunate men who have been put to death by the Natives, in revenge for the murders and abominable cruelties which



have been practised upon them by the white people," the Lieutenant-Governor, aware of the evil consequences that must result to the settlement, if such cruelties are continued, and abhorring the conduct of those miscreants who perpetrate them, hereby declares that any person whomsoever who shall offer violence to a native, or who shall in cool blood murder, or cause any of them to be murdered, shall, on proof being made of the same, be dealt with and proceeded against as if such violence had been offered, or murder committed on, a civilized person."

This was worthily carrying out the instructions of the Minister, Lord Hobart, so far as declarations went; but history gives us no instance of the execution of the decree. The man who penned the Order shortly after departed this life, a disorderly interregnum followed, and, when a new Lieutenant-Governor from England appeared, we find the island in so chaotic a state, that there was some excuse for further neglect. When we see the Governor of a British Colony so reduced in resources, or so bereft of energy, as to hold correspondence with an outlaw, a ferocious man of blood, and afterwards consent to the terms of a Bushranger longing for a visit to the capital, when tired of his chase for victims, we cannot expect the enforcement of the command of January 29th, 1810. But we can fully appreciate the truthfulness of the *Sydney Gazette* of April 10th, 1813, when describing the society of Van Diemen's Land, at that period, and the real progress of the "Black War."

"The Natives of Van Diemen's Land," quoth the *Gazette*, "continue to be very inimical, which is mostly attributed to their frequent ill-treatment from the Bushrangers, who, to avoid punishment for their offences, have betaken themselves to the woods, there miserably to exist on the adventitious succours which those wilds afford. Acts of cruelty are reported of these desperadoes against the Natives; and the latter seldom suffer an opportunity to escape of wreaking their vengeance upon all persons of the same colour with the lawless wanderers, without discrimination."

It was on the 26th of June, 1813, that the Government issued a proclamation against those disturbers of the peace of both Whites and Blacks. It came upon the occasion of an attack upon a herd of cattle at the Coal River. The Governor



proceeded to point out the cause: "The resentment of these poor uncultivated beings has been justly provoked by a most barbarous and inhuman mode of proceeding acted toward them, viz. the robbing of their children." The Governor then expresses his horror at such shameful behaviour, and exclaims in quite unofficial language, "Let any man put his hand to his heart and ask which is the savage—the white man who robs the parent of his children, or the black man who boldly steps forward to resent the injury, and recover his stolen offspring; the conclusion, alas! is too obvious." The end of the proclamation pledges the Government to punish all so offending to the utmost rigour of the law.

To pass on in the order of time, quotations can now be given from the newly-born *Hobart Town Gazette*, which—though established by a private individual, the son of the founder of the Australian Press, at once the editor, printer, pressman, and proprietor of the *Sydney Gazette*—was an official organ of Government.

An interesting account is given in the paper of August 20, 1814, of a visit of some Natives to Hobart Town, and the valuable service of a courageous and benevolent convict, the forerunner of George Augustus Robinson, the Conciliator. The circumstance exemplifies the fact that our Natives were different from the continental ones, in their indisposition to approach the Whites. Here we have a record of an important tribe living on the North Arm—a peninsula at the junction of the Derwent and the Storm Bay, and only a few miles from the capital—having had no acquaintance with our civilization after our ten years' occupancy of the island. As these people were either the same as, or the neighbours to, the kangaroo hunters so wantonly fired at in 1804, there was some reason for their retirement, as well as some apology for an intended outrage. The newspaper paragraph is given with its literal peculiarities:—

"We mentioned some time ago of several Natives being brought to town from the woods at South Arm, after receiving certain articles of clothing from His Honor the Lieut.-Governor and other humane gentlemen of this Settlement, they were conducted through the streets by A. Campbell (a prisoner). Their curiosity, which had never been gratified before with such a sight, prompted them to examine



everything with wonder and amazement, without bestowing their attention longer than a moment on any single object.

"The Lieut.-Governor having expressed a desire to see the remainder of the Natives left at the South Arm, Campbell accompanied with 2 other persons again returned to that place, the party spent 3 days in fruitless search after them, when they discovered two Natives who informed them that the rest were on Betsy's Island.

"Next morning Campbell and party went in a boat to that island, accompanied by a native woman of one of the neighbouring islands, and who has lived with Campbell for some years; this woman has been of considerable service to the party, by representing the humane treatment she received from the White People. On landing they saw a number of Natives sitting round the fire, and on their perceiving the children clothed they were greatly astonished, and felt their dresses; when the Natives informed them of their reception in town, they all expressed a wish by Campbell's woman to see Hobart, and it was with difficulty the party prevented the Boat from sinking, so eager were they to get in. Campbell brought 13 to town, who received every kindness and humanity from the Lieut.-Governor, who likewise clothed them. They were afterwards landed on the Island of Le Bruni (Bruni) at their own request.

"We trust that the exertions of Campbell and his party will be a prelude to more intercourse with the native tribes, and by the means of such humane treatment endeavour to reclaim them from a savage life."

The kindness of the Hobart Town people to a few visitors from the Wilds told favourably afterwards; for, from another extract, we learn that Campbell was indirectly the means of saving the life of one of his countrymen.

"A few days ago," says the *Hobart Town Gazette*, "upwards of 100 Natives surrounded a house at South Arm, and knocked at the door; on the person within opening it, and perceiving the Natives, he was in great terror, and after shutting the door endeavoured to escape by a back window, but seeing it in vain, he again opened the door, when several Natives came in, to whom he offered victuals, but they refused to eat. After they had surveyed the premises, an elderly man led the person by the arm, who lived in the



house, nearly half a mile into the woods, and placed him in the middle of them, and at the moment the Natives were about to throw their spears at the unfortunate victim, a native man, whom A. Campbell had brought to Hobart Town some time ago, addressed them, when they all walked away, leaving the person to return to his own residence. Thus by the humanity already shown to these Natives the life of a fellow-creature has been preserved."

A gentleman, whose station was in the centre of the island, spoke to me of the Natives occasionally coming down to his hut, as early as 1814, and bartering a kangaroo's tail for a bit of English mutton. Others have told me that they were able to travel about the Bush in perfect security between that period and 1822. Several elderly ladies have narrated to me circumstances showing much geniality and friendly intercourse; as, the playing of their children with the Aborigines, and their boys going to hunt with the dark skins. These ladies had the conviction that such a happy state of things would have continued but for the conduct of the Bush prisoner servants toward the native females. An old man, who had been assigned servant to Mr. Wedge, gave me the story of falling in with a company of two hundred, in 1819, quietly camping on Mr. Archer's run, and of seeing that same year a score of Blacks assisting at Mr. Bonner's farm in harvest time, receiving potatoes and damper for payment. Even the *Hobart Town Gazette*, so late as 1824, contemplating the quiet times, writes: "Perhaps, taken collectively, the sable Natives of this colony are the most peaceful creatures in the world."

But from even early days occasional outbreaks took place. The difference, however, between these and the outrages of later times; lay in the fact that, while most of the former were confined to petty thieving, the latter were more frequently from motives of hatred and revenge, and parts of a combined movement of aggression.

The arrest of amicable relations was owing, as has been stated, to interference with the gins, and the stealing of children. We have been so accustomed to associate kidnapping with roving gipsies, wild Indians, and savage Tartars, as to doubt the charge when attached to our own countrymen. Yet the very proclamations of Government attest



to the veracity of the indictment. The first chaplain took some interest in the people; he often had a festive gathering at his house, and described them as being always well behaved. He had visits of twenty at a time at his cottage. But, after 1814, the numbers dropped off, until his visitors deserted him and his larder altogether. Investigating the cause of the change, he was told by the Natives that they would not go to town again because bad men stole their piccaninnies.

When Governor Macquarie returned to Sydney after his memorable tour through the island of his dependency, he issued a Public Notice, June 18th, 1814, thanking the settlers of Van Diemen's Land for their loyal attention, and praising them for their enterprise and progress; but the condition of the Aborigines of the little colony touched his humane heart, and stirred his generous impulses to action. Nobly did he, as Governor-General of the various settlements in those southern parts, labour for the good of the dark race. It was the constant exhibition of brutality toward them that aroused his anger, and called forth the following strong language in this Proclamation when alluding to some case:—

“Although it was not sufficiently clear and satisfactory to warrant the institution of criminal prosecution, it was enough so to convince any unprejudiced man that the *first personal attacks* were made on the part of settlers and their servants. Several years having elapsed since anything like a principle of hostility has been acted upon, or even in the slightest degree exhibited in the conduct of the Natives, it must be evident that no deep-rooted prejudice exists in their minds against British subjects or white men.”

An amusing story is told of an affront given the tribes one time when Governor Sorell had invited a number to Hobart Town. They were gathered in the Government Paddock, a large reserve outside of the town, and were exercising themselves before the Whites. One young girl, however, in the very mischief of a spoiled beauty, took up one of the men's spears, and threw it at the reigning beau of the day—one Captain Hamilton. Although the weapon never struck, nor had it been intended to strike, the son of Mars, being indignant at the liberty taken with his loftiness, complained to the Governor, and insisted upon the rout of the Natives.



Colonel Sorell, to appease the excited soldier, requested his visitors to withdraw from the camp. These were so indignant at the treatment they received for so trifling an accident, that they would never accept of another gubernatorial invitation.

In 1816 the interior was unwontedly disturbed. The first notice of the fact is indicated in the peculiar style of the *Gazette* of the period :—

“The Black Natives of this Colony have for the last few weeks manifested a strange Hostility towards the Up-country Settlers, and in killing and driving away their Cattle than has been witnessed since the Settling of the Colony ; And since their visit to New Norfolk, they have been at the herd of Mr. Thomas McNeelance near Jerico and killed two beautiful Cows.” The New Norfolk affair arose from a quarrel between three stock-keepers and a score of Natives, when weapons were freely employed. Forty spears were thrown ; but evidently at a discreet distance, for no Bushman was hurt. The shot told better, as three Blacks were killed, and one poor fellow was wounded and taken.

The year 1817 was signalized by the romance of Michael Howe and the native girl Mary Cockerell. The desperate Bushranger, the terror of the colony for years, the partner of a treaty with the Governor, had formed a connection with this young creature, and dwelt with her for some months in a retreat not far from Oatlands, though afterwards removing for safety to a charming woodland home among the mountains of the Shannon country. There, chased closely by some who sought the great reward for his capture, and annoyed by the inability of his black companion to keep pace with him through the scrub, he drew a pistol and fired at her, severely wounding her. The ruffian escaped, but the girl was caught. Indignant at his cruelty, she promised to take the constables to his hut. This led eventually to his discovery and death. Poor Mary died in the Hobart Town Hospital. The paper mentions Michael Howe's increased cruelties to the poor Natives who fell in his way, on his retreat westward to the far interior.

In New South Wales I found the copy of a letter sent by Governor Macquarie to his Lieutenant-Governor at Hobart Town, in which there is this interesting reference to Mary :—

“In co-operation with your humane feelings in regard to



Mary, the native girl whom you sent hither some time since as a witness respecting the Bushrangers, I had a private decent lodging provided for her here, where she has ever since remained out of the way of bad connections or improper intercourse, and she is now about to get some decent apparel. His Excellency the Governor has deemed it expedient to detain her here for some little time further, lest she should renew her intercourse with Howe, and be the means of protracting the term of his submission, or more desirable apprehension."

Governor Sorell issued a proclamation on May 19th, 1817, against the perpetrators of base outrages upon the persons of some inoffensive Aborigines. After mentioning the sportive firing upon the poor creatures, the official paper proceeds: "The Lieutenant-Governor thus publicly declares his determination that if, after the promulgation of this publication, any person or persons shall be charged with killing, firing at, or committing any act of outrage or aggression on the native people, the offender or offenders shall be sent to Port Jackson to take their trial before the Criminal Court."

A brighter page meets our eye in 1818. The Temple of Janus might have had its gates closed. A serene air is breathed by the colony. A burst of philanthropic feeling prevailed. The moral sentiments of the editor of the solitary newspaper were strangely brought into action. A real sermon is delivered in the *Gazette* on April 25th, 1818, and an affecting appeal is made on behalf of the oppressed and gentle ones of the forest. Let us read it:—

"Notwithstanding the hostility which has so long prevailed in the breast of the Natives of this island toward Europeans, we now perceive with heartfelt satisfaction that hatred in some measure gradually subsiding. Several of them are to be seen about this town and its environs, who obtain subsistence from the charitable and well-disposed. The more we contemplate the peculiar situation of this people, the more are we impressed with the great arrearage of justice which is due to them. Are not the Aborigines of this colony the children of our Government? Are we not all happy but they? And are they not miserable? Can they raise themselves from this sad condition? Or do they not claim our assistance? And shall that assistance be denied? Those who fancy that 'God did



not make of one blood all the nations upon the earth,' must be convinced that the Natives of whatever matter formed *can* be civilized, nay, can be christianized. The moral Governor of the world will hold us accountable. The Aborigines demand our protection. They are the most helpless members, and being such, have a peculiar claim upon us all, to extend every aid in our power, as well in relation to their necessities as to those enlightening means which shall at last introduce them from the chilling rigours of the forest into the same delightful temperature which we enjoy."

The calmness and serenity of that year changed to storm and trouble in 1819. It is the ever-told tale of provocation and revenge. Early in the month of March the Oyster Bay eastern tribe speared John Kemp and another man. But the journal of the day gives the provoking cause in these words: "It is well known that some time before Kemp was killed a native man was shot in the woods by some of the stockmen to the eastward, and that the women have been also deprived of their children in that quarter."

In 1819 one Jones occupied the position of stock-keeper on the station of Messrs. Morris and Stocker, near Relief River, subsequently known as the Macquarie. His fellow-servant, M'Candless, had gone to look after the sheep on the plains, and a neighbour's man, James Forrest, had called in at the hut. On a sudden, M'Candless burst in, nearly out of breath, declaring that he had run for his life from the Blacks, who were spearing the sheep. A chase was resolved upon, and two infirm muskets were taken for the battle. The light of day was departing when the men came in sight of about two hundred Aborigines. They sought to frighten them from the hill, and presented their pieces at them. The men of the forest, with a wholesome dread of fire-arms, did not come down from their citadel to attack the Europeans, but were content with making a hideous noise, while some bolder spirits came forward, quivering their spears, and threatening destruction. But the stock-keepers suddenly ascertained, to their horror, that but one charge was in their possession, because the powder-flask had been dropped in the hurry of pursuit. They had but one way open—a retreat; and this they accomplished in the deepening gloom of evening, with the best show of courage they could maintain.



At daybreak, Jones set off for the sheepfold, leaving his mates in bed. He had gone but a few hundred yards, when, hearing some talk, he looked backward, and saw a crowd of Blacks descending the hill towards the hut, with the evident intention of firing the bark roof, and murdering the men. Jones ran hastily back, aroused the men, and prepared for defence. Standing outside the door, and facing their dark foes, the Europeans again presented their guns, and ordered the party off. But some endeavoured to get round another way with their lighted torches, while others stood on the hill-side and answered the challenge with shouts of derisive laughter. Spears, waddies, and stones were thrown at the three, but with harmless effect, from the distance of the combatants. One, evidently the leader, was of gigantic size, and was armed with a huge spear unlike the rest. He stood erect, with his weapon in repose, calmly giving orders to the tribe.

Again and again did the Englishmen pull the trigger without procuring fire. The Natives perceived their helpless condition, and motioned them to leave the hut, evidently seeking the good rations of the Bushmen. Hours passed in this bloodless warfare. The Whites saw that further stay was hopeless, as the patience of the warriors would soon be tired out, and a rush would destroy them and their hut. So they rapidly fled towards a gully. The others followed, and threw their spears. A wild cow and several kangaroo dogs were pierced, but, for a time, one wound only was received by the pursued. At last the two hundred, red-ochred all over their naked bodies, hemmed in their victims, and brought them to bay. The vexatious guns would not go off at the pull of the trigger, to the boisterous amusement of their opponents.

Jones now received three spears at once. One passed through his right cheek, another through the muscle of his right arm, and a third fastened in his right side. A mate came to pull out the weapons, and had a spear sent into his back. The third man was yet untouched. For seven hours had the terrible struggle continued. The stockmen were exhausted, and stood like sheep prepared for the slaughter. The Natives saw that their finishing hour had come. The chief gave the word for them to charge in with the waddy, and brain the three. "At this moment," says Jones, "a



most fortunate accident occurred, which I have ever considered an act of Providence." This was the sudden discharge of one of the awkward pieces. The shot struck the portly chief, who fell dead on the spot. His countrymen could not understand the operation, and lifted him upon his feet to see if he could stand; while all the others shouted and beat their breasts with extreme emotion. Finding their efforts to recover him vain, they were seized with sudden fright, and fled.

A very interesting and remarkable Government Order appeared from the pen of Colonel Sorell, dated from Hobart Town, March 13th, 1819, which may most appropriately end this first chapter of the "Black War." It is so humane and judicious, and so particularly enters into the whole question relative to the conduct of the two races, as to be considered one of the best State papers ever drawn up in the colony. It is given in full.

The "Black War," so called, may be said to date from 1819, when the following PUBLIC ORDER of Governor Colonel Sorell was issued, and which places the whole question fairly before the reader:—

"From information received by his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, there seems reason to apprehend that outrages have been recently perpetrated against some of the Native People in the remote country adjoining the River Plenty, though the result of the enquiries instituted upon these reports has not established the Facts alleged, further than that two Native children have remained in the Hands of a Person resident above the Falls:—Upon this subject, which the Lieutenant-Governor considers of the highest Importance, as well to Humanity as to the Peace and Security of the Settlement, His Honor cannot omit addressing the Settlers.

"The Lieutenant-Governor is aware that many of the Settlers and Stock-keepers consider the Natives as a Hostile People, seeking, without Provocation, Opportunities to destroy them and their Stock: and towards whom any attempts at Forbearance or Conciliation would be useless. It is, however, most certain that if the Natives were intent upon Destruction of this kind, and if they were incessantly to watch for opportunities of effecting it, the Mischief done by them to the Owners of Sheep or Cattle, which are now dispersed for grazing over so great a part of the Interior Country,



would be increased one hundredfold. But so far from any systematic Plan for Destroying the Stock or People being pursued by the Native Tribes, their Meetings with the Herdsmen appear generally to be accidental ; and it is the Opinion of the best informed Persons who have been longest in the Settlement, that the former are seldom the Assailants, and that when they are they act under the Impression of recent Injuries done to some of them by White People. It is undeniable that in many former Instances, Cruelties have been perpetrated repugnant to Humanity and disgraceful to the British Character, while few attempts can be traced on the Part of the Colonists to Conciliate the Native People, or to make them sensible that Peace and Forbearance are the Objects desired. The Impressions received from earlier Injuries are kept up by the occasional Outrages of Miscreants whose Scene of Crime is so remote as to render detection difficult, and who sometimes wantonly set fire to and kill the Men, and at others pursue the Women for the purpose of compelling them to abandon their children. This last Outrage is perhaps the most certain of all to excite in the Sufferers a strong Thirst for revenge against all White Men, and to incite the Natives to take Vengeance indiscriminately, according to the General Practice of an uncivilized People, wherever in their Migrations they fall in with the Herds and Stockmen.

“It is not only those who perpetrated such Enormities against a People comparatively Defenceless, that suffer ; all the Owners of Stock and the Stock-keepers are involved in the Consequences brought on by the wanton and criminal Acts of a few.

“From the conduct of the Native People, when free from any feeling of Injury, toward those who have sought intercourse with them, there is strong reason to hope that they might be conciliated. On the North-east coast, where Boats occasionally touch, and at Macquarie Harbour, where the Natives have been lately seen, they have been found Unsuspicious and Peaceable, manifesting no disposition to Injure ; and they are known to be equally Inoffensive in other Places where the Stock-keepers treat them with Mildness and Forbearance.

“A careful Avoidance, on the part of the Settlers and



Stockmen, of conduct tending to excite Suspicion of intended Injury, and a strict Forbearance from all Acts or Appearances of Hostility, except when rendered indispensable for positive Self-defence, or the Preservation of the Stock, may yet remove from the Minds of the Native People the Impressions left by past Cruelties : so that the Meetings between them and the Colonists, which the Extension of the Grazing Grounds and Progressive Occupation of the Country must render yearly more frequent, may be injurious to neither ; and that these Mischiefs, which a Perseverance in Cruelty and Aggression must lead to, and which must involve the Stock in perpetual Danger, and the Stockmen in Responsibility for the Lives that may be lost, may be prevented.

“To effect this Object, is no less the Interest than the Duty of the Settlers and Stockmen ; to bring to condign Punishment any one who shall be open to proof of having destroyed or maltreated any of the Native People (not strictly in Self-defence), will be the Duty and is the Determination of the Lieutenant-Governor, supported by the Magistracy, and by the Assistance of all the just and well-disposed Settlers.

“With a view to prevent the Continuance of the Cruelty before-mentioned, of depriving the Natives of their Children ; it is hereby Ordered that the Resident Magistrates at the District of Pittwater and Coal River, and the District Constables in all the other Districts, do forthwith take an account of all the Native Youths and Children which are Resident with any of the Settlers or Stock-keepers, stating from whom, and in what manner, they were obtained.

“The same Magistrates and the District Constables are in future to take an Account of any Native Person or Child which shall come or be brought into their District, or Country adjoining, together with the circumstances attending it. These Reports are to be transmitted to the Secretary's Office, Hobart Town.

“No Person whatever will be allowed to retain Possession of a Native Youth or Child, unless it shall be clearly proved that the Consent of the Parents had been given ; or that the Child had been found in a state to demand Shelter and Protection, in which Case the Person into whose Hands it may fall, is immediately to report the circumstance to the nearest Magistrate or Constable.



“ All Native Youths and Children who shall be known to be with any of the Settlers or Stock-keepers, unless so accounted for, will be removed to Hobart Town, where they will be supported and instructed at the Charge and under the Direction of Government.

“ By command of His Honor

“ The Lieutenant-Governor,

“ H. E. ROBINSON, *Secretary.*”

### SORROWS OF THE RACE.

Who could adequately picture the story of the wrongs of the Tasmanians? We are indignant at the destruction of the Guanches of the Canary Isles by the Spaniards; we are horrified at the exterminating policy of the Napoleon of South African Zulus; we are awestruck at the total disappearance of whole nations of antiquity; and should we have no feeling of regret at causes which led to the annihilation of the tribes of Tasmania? They melted not away as the snow of the Alps beneath the soft breath of the Fön from the South, but were stricken down in their might, as the dark firs of the forest by the ruthless avalanche. It was not a contest between rival nations of civilization. No senator uttered a “Carthage must be destroyed” to incite the faltering energies of a struggling people. No Thermopylæ, which witnessed the expiring effort of its sons of freedom, remains in Tasmania’s mountain fastnesses. No bard has chronicled the deeds of heroism, no Ossian told of chiefs and daughters fair. A long series of cruelties and misfortunes gradually wrought the destruction of these primitive inhabitants.

They would not, could not, be reduced to slavery. They would not, could not, assimilate with the habits of the intruders upon their soil. As their own brilliant Waratah, when torn from the rocky crest of its mountain home, refuses to expand its crimson petals in the artificial bed, and pines to death for the loss of its free and bracing native airs, so could they never assume the rigid robe of civilization, nor forsake their wild, wooded Tiers for the tenements of town.



We came upon them as evil genii, and blasted them with the breath of our presence. We broke up their home circles. We arrested their laughing corrobory. We turned their song into weeping, and their mirth to sadness. Without being disciples of Rousseau, without the simple faith of the French voyager, who discovered a nymph of grace and beauty in the dark Ourâ Ourâ of the woods, and beheld primeval innocence in the gentle, patriarchal government of tribes, it may yet be believed that social virtues were developed beneath the gum-tree shade—that maternal joy sparkled in the eyes of the opossum-skin clad one, as she joined in the gambols of her piccaninny boy—that honest friendship united hands and hearts of brother hunters—while soft glances, sweet smiles, and throbbing bosoms, told that love could dwell within Clematis bowers, as well as in the woodbine shade.

The white man entered this peaceful scene. The hunter stayed his carolling among the hills, and stole stealthily upon his own green sod. The mother hushed the tongue of the prattling one, and checked within herself the bounding emotions, lest Echo tell the dreaded stranger. And silenced was the talk of love ; for deeds of wrong to matron duty and to maiden troth had chilled the heart, and flashed the eye with hate and rage.

The story of their sufferings would be like that written by the benevolent padre, Las Casas, in his 'Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies,' which is thus described by the historian Prescott: "It is a tale of woe. Every line of the work may be said to be written in blood." And yet it may be truly declared that Government had cherished proper sentiments towards the poor Indians, for the historian observes: "The history of Spanish colonial legislation is the history of the impotent struggles of the Government in behalf of the Natives, against the avarice and cruelty of its subjects." In the case of our islanders, there was not the apology of avarice, as these had nothing to give ; it was rather a bal propensity to injure the defenceless, and an insatiable lust, that would at all risks obtain its brutal gratification.

One great source of mischief was the liberty given to the prisoners, about the year 1806, to disperse themselves in search of kangaroos, during a season of famine. We can readily imagine the effect of letting loose in the Bush a number of



reckless bad men, who had been previously subjected to the rigour of prison discipline.

At first kindly treated by the dark men of the forest, they repaid their hospitality by frightful deeds of violence and wrong. Shrieks of terrified and outraged innocence rose with the groans of slaughtered guardians, in the hitherto peaceful vales of Tasmania. One wonders not at the quotation of the Rev. John West, from the *Derwent Star* newspaper of 1810: "The Natives, who have been rendered desperate by the cruelties they have experienced from our people, have now begun to distress us by attacking our cattle." One extract from the *Star* of the same year, 1810, painfully illustrates the subject: "The unfortunate man, Russell, is a striking instance of Divine agency, which has overtaken him at last, and punished him by the hands of those very people who have suffered so much from him; he being known to have exercised his barbarous disposition in murdering or torturing any who unfortunately came within his reach." The indignation of honest old Governor Davey was strongly excited, when in 1813 he penned these words: "That he could not have believed that British subjects would have so ignominiously stained the honour of their country and themselves, as to have acted in the manner they did towards the Aborigines."

Governor Arthur was much shocked at the barbarity of his people, and unable to prevent the evil. Immediately after his arrival in the colony, a tribe applied to him for protection, and it was readily granted. All that personal attention and kindness could do was done to retain them near Hobart Town, and to secure them from insult and injury. They settled at Kangaroo Point, a tongue of land separated from the town by the broad estuary of the Derwent. There they stayed quietly and happily for a couple of years, when a savage murder was committed by some of their white neighbours, and the camp broke up immediately for the haunts of wildness.

The infamous treatment of the poor females was the exciting cause of the bitter and revengeful spirit manifested by the Blacks toward our race. It was not alone that these unfortunates were the victims of their passions, but the objects of their barbarity. If perchance a woman was decoyed to the shepherd's hut, no gentleness of usage was employed to win her regard, and secure her stay; threatening language, the



lash, and the chain were the harsher expedients of his savage love. A story is told by Dr. Ross, describing his journey up to the Shannon in 1823. "We met," said he, "one of Mr. Lord's men sitting on the stump of a tree, nearly starved to death. He told us that three days before, a black woman whom he had caught, and had chained to a log with a bullock-chain, and whom he had dressed with a fine linen shirt (the only one he had), in hopes, as he said, to tame her, had contrived somehow to slip the chain from her leg, and ran away, shirt and all." The doctor adds, "I fear his object in chaining the poor creature was not exactly pure and disinterested." The reader will not be surprised to hear that not long after this gentle lover was hanged for exercising his *benevolence* upon some of his own countrymen. We hear of another who, having caught an unhappy girl, sought to relieve her fears, or subdue her sulks, as it was termed, by first giving her a morning's flogging with a bullock-whip, and then fastening her to a tree near his hut until he returned in the evening. The same fellow was afterwards found speared to death at a water hole.

A settler on the Esk river informed me that a neighbour of his, wanting a *gin*, asked him to accompany him on his Sabine expedition. He had heard that a woman had been seen with a small party on an island in the river, and was then on his way thither to seize her. He pointed exultingly to a bullock-chain which he carried, as the means of capture. I was struck with the criticism of an "Old Hand," a rough carter, but one who carried a kind heart beneath a bear's skin. We were talking of the former times, and of the cruelty practised upon the blacks, especially in the stealing of their women. With no particular admiration for the dark people, some of whom had tried their spears upon his body, he had a sense of manliness within him, and thus expressed his opinion: "If a man was to run away with my wife, don't you think if I could fall in with him that I wouldn't crack his head for him? I would *so*."

Old Tom Ward, who was transported in 1818, and who gave me some striking records of the past, said that when up the country in 1820, the stock-keepers at Mr. Stocker's, of Salt Pan Plains, were guilty of abominable conduct toward two Native women. These afterwards told their *Coolies* or



husbands, and the tribe surrounded the hut, and killed two men out of the three. Instances are upon record of murders committed solely with the view of seizing upon the females of a Mob. A lady once told me of a man-servant of hers getting speared after offering some insult to a *gin*. He narrowly escaped with his life, being long confined to the hut. Repeated cases were known of brutal stock-keepers and shepherds emasculating the males. Horror-stricken by tales of men such as these, the benevolent Quaker, Mr. James Backhouse, exclaimed, "They were of such a character, as to remove any wonder at the determination of these injured people to try to drive from their land a race of men, among whom were persons guilty of such deeds."

The Bushrangers of Van Diemen's Land were sore foes to the Aborigines, from a natural cruelty of disposition, and from a fancied fear of their divulging the site of their brigand retreat. Lemon and others, when in a merry mood, bound them to trees, and used them as targets for practice. It was an ex-Bushranger who confessed to me that he would "as leave shoot them as so many sparrows." Another worthy, who had above fifty years before left his country for his country's good, declared to me that he heard from a friend of Michael Howe, that that celebrated ruffian would lay down his musket to induce the blacks to come toward him, but that on their approach he would fire at them from his retreat, pulling the trigger with his toes. The Bushranger Dunn carried off Native women to his lair, and cruelly abused them. So exasperated were the men against the Whites, on account of the cruelty of that wretched outlaw, that they murdered several of the neighbouring and inoffensive settlers. Mr. Melville, long connected with the press of Tasmania, has the following story in his sketch of the country. "The Bushranger Carrots killed a black fellow, and seized his *gin*; then cutting off the man's head, the brute fastened it round the wife's neck, and drove the weeping victim to his den." The Bushranger Dunn was very cruel to the Natives. A letter, in 1815, blames the Bushrangers as the great cause of the Aborigines not mixing with the settlers.

A respectable colonist, lately deceased in Melbourne, naming many instances of cruelty to the Natives, assured me that he knew of two men who had boasted of killing thirty



at one time. Mr. Backhouse relates that one party, out after the Blacks, killed thirty in capturing eleven. Quamby's Bluff, an eastern spur of the great central highlands of the island, curling up with its crest as if torn by violence from the Tier, was so called from a poor hunted creature there falling upon his knees, and shrieking out, "Quamby! Quamby!—mercy! mercy!" A gentleman, many years a magistrate in these colonies, mentioned to me the death of a shepherd of his near the Macquarie River. Soon after a company of soldiers went in pursuit of the supposed murderers. Falling in with a tribe around their night-fires, in a gully at the back of the river, they shot indiscriminately at the group. Many were slain, but no Government inquiry was made into the well-known circumstance. An eye-witness of a similar night attack has this description: "One man was shot; he sprang up, turned round like a whipping-top, and fell dead. The party then went up to the fires, found a great number of waddies and spears, and an infant sprawling on the ground, which one of the party pitched into the fire."

No more illustrative proof of the manners of that dark era can be presented, than we find recorded in the history of Jorgenson, when out in 1826: "Two days after I saw Scott," says he, "a large tribe came down to Dr. Thomson's hut, which was occupied by three assigned servants. These men struck a bargain with some of the Blacks for some of their women, and in return to give them some blankets and sugar. However, no sooner were the females on their way to join their tribe, than the servants sallied out, and deprived them of their ill-gotten store. The Aborigines, nearly one hundred in number, now exceedingly exasperated, surrounded the hut, and had certainly effected their revenge, either by burning down the hut, or otherwise killing the aggressors, had not the Bushranger Dunn come to their timely assistance. Being so disappointed, the Blacks, in the heat of resentment, fell in with poor aged Scott, and murdered him in a most barbarous manner." This Scott had heretofore been on the most friendly terms with the natives, and his dreadful end will furnish the key to many apparently inexplicable murders of innocent people, even women and children, by the Aborigines, when the two races were afterwards in frequent collision.



In treating of this subject, I feel with Dr. Coke, writer of a work on the Natives of the West Indies, that "the author who records their miseries will be almost deemed an incredible writer; and while his narrative will be perused with astonishment, it will perhaps be associated with the marvellous, and consigned to the shelves of romance." The catalogue, though one of horrors, is too important to be altogether passed by. A few stories are here strung together without attention to order of time.

In July 1827 a man was killed by the Blacks up in the country, near the Western Tiers. He had been long familiar with the tribe, having before lived for some years among the Natives of New Holland, but had incurred the displeasure of the Tasmanians at last. The neighbouring settlers gathered together for a chase after the criminals, and took revenge indeed for the death of one man; for the *Colonial Times* declares: "They report that there must be about sixty of them killed and wounded."

A party of the Richmond police were passing through the Bush in 1827, when a tribe, seeing them, got up on a hill and threw stones upon them. The others fired in return, and then charged them with the bayonet. We have Mr. G. A. Robinson's authority for stating that "a party of military and constables got a number of natives between two perpendicular rocks, on a sort of shelf, and killed seventy of them, dragging the women and children from the crevices of the rocks, and *dashing out their brains.*"

A wretched man, named Ibbens, was accustomed to go persistently after the Eastern tribe with a double-barrelled gun, creeping among them at dusk, until he had killed the half of them. One man boasted that he had thrown an old woman upon the fire, and burnt her to death. The *Colonial Times* speaks on one occasion of a party of soldiers and others approaching within thirty yards of their night-fires, and killing "an immense quantity of the blacks." Well might Dr. Marshall tell Lord Glenelg, "The murders which, at almost every page, have blotted with blood the history of the British Colonies, cry out against us unto the Most High God, with a voice that has not always been unanswered, for national calamity to succeed national wickedness."

Many years ago I fell in with one of the lowest order of



convicts, who assured me that he liked to kill a black fellow better than smoke his pipe ; adding, " and I am a rare one at that, too." He related the following adventure. Out one evening with some armed stock-keeping mates, he climbed Maloney's Sugar Loaf, and saw a tribe lighting their fires for the night. He returned with the news. Then, abstaining from noise and supper-fire themselves, they waited till just before dawn, advanced toward their unsuspecting victims in a crescent line, so as to cut off retreat, and fired close. He quietly remarked : " There wasn't many of them got off." I dissembled a little, and in an off-hand way inquired how many he had cleared off. He shook the stump of his amputated arm, smiled archly at me, and said, " No—no—that's not a fair question."

Dr. Nixon, Bishop of Tasmania, is forced to say of such scenes : " There are many such on record, which make us blush for humanity when we read them, and forbid us to wonder that the maddened savages' indiscriminate fury should not only have refused to recognize the distinction between friend and foe, but have taught him to regard each white man as an intruding enemy, who must be got rid of at any cost."

My worthy friend Mr. Shoobridge, a much-respected Tasmanian colonist, is my authority for the story of a sad tragedy. Two men went out shooting birds. Some Natives, seeing them approach, hastily fled. A woman, far advanced in pregnancy, unable to run with the rest, climbed up a tree, and broke down the branches around her for concealment. But she had been observed by the sportsmen. One of these proposed to shoot her, but the other objected. The first, however, dropped behind, and fired at the unfortunate creature. A fearful scream was heard, and a premature birth took place. That very day the wife and child of this monster were crossing the Derwent, when a sudden squall upset the boat, and both were drowned.

The same informant also told me that, when young, a fellow gave him an account of some capital fun, as it was called. He and some others took advantage of a robbery at Hamilton, and charged it upon an inoffensive tribe in the neighbourhood. Without warning, an expedition was fitted out in the night, and a terrible slaughter took place. The miserable remnant were infuriated at the treachery and



cruelty, and revenged themselves by years of outrage and murder. Mr. Shoobridge's father was dining with a country settler, when a man came in, and called out, "Well, Master! I've shot three more crows to-day,"—meaning, *Blacks*.

The historian of Tasmania, Rev. Mr. West, did not exaggerate when he wrote: "The wounded were brained; the infant cast into the flames; the musket was driven into the quivering flesh; and the social fire, around which the Natives gathered to slumber, became, before morning, their funeral pile." The *Courier* of June 11, 1836, admits that "thousands were hunted down like wild beasts, and actually destroyed." The learned Dr. Broca, the distinguished French ethnologist, asserts that the English "have committed upon the Tasmanian race, and that in the nineteenth century, execrable atrocities a hundred times less excusable than the hitherto unrivalled crimes of which the Spaniards were guilty in the sixteenth century in the Antilles."

The public mind gets callous by the continuance of scenes of blood, as the history of the French Revolution testifies. For the character of our colonies, we could wish that such a paragraph as the following, in the year 1826, had never seen the light: "Let them have enough of Redcoats and bullet fare. For every man they murder, hunt them down, and drop ten of them. This is our specific—try it." The feeling is truly exhibited in the statement of the paper of Dec. 1, 1826, that "the settlers and stock-keepers are determined to annihilate every Black who may act hostilely." The cruelty took an indirect turn with some of these out-station people. Thus, Captain Holman talks about a fellow taking a pair of pistols, one only of which was loaded, and seeking to amuse a native by firing the harmless one at his own ear. Then, presenting the other weapon to the man, and inviting him to try the same funny performance on himself, he had the grim delight of seeing the black fellow's brains blown out.

Let us turn, for relief, to a pleasing story of 1822. A tribe had lighted their evening fires in the Bush not far from a field of corn ready to cut, and the flames were carried by a high wind toward the farm. The farmer writes: "We were doing our best to extinguish it by beating the flames out with green boughs, but our efforts would have been in vain had not the whole tribe of Blacks all at once come forward to



assist me. Even some hours afterwards, when the flames again broke out in two or three places, they were on the alert in a moment to put them out. I mention this incident, as it was an act of friendship on their part, and shows that when they have not been insulted, or had cause of revenge, and are able to discriminate their friends from their foes, they are not wanting to reciprocate offices of friendship and humanity."

The Rev. Dr. Lang, in his indignant letter to Earl Durham, narrates a terrible story. "A spot," said he, "was pointed out to me a few years ago in the interior of the island, where seventeen of these had been shot in cold blood. They had been bathing, in the heat of a summer's day, in the deep pool of a river, in a sequestered and romantic glen, when they were suddenly surprised by a party of armed colonists who had secured the passes, and I believe not one of them was left to tell the tale. Nay, a convict Bushranger in Van Diemen's Land, who was hanged a few years ago for crimes committed against the European inhabitants of the colony, confessed, when under sentence of death, that he had actually been in the habit of shooting the black Natives to feed his dogs."

Cruelties to the poor females have already been mentioned. Mrs. Guy, of New Norfolk, gave me a proof of attempted ruffianism in her day. Once when standing by her door she saw a native woman, pursued by three Englishmen, run to the high bank, leap into the Derwent, and swim across the broad stream. The benevolent lady hastened down to the poor creature, and found her much agitated with fear, and trembling violently. Taking her home, she gave her some warm tea, and bound a blanket around her. The husband came afterwards to thank the lady, and voluntarily cut up a lot of firewood in her yard as a return of gratitude. Capt. Stokes informs the readers of his valuable work on Australian Discovery, that a convict servant confessed this cruelty to a captured *gin*: "He kept the poor creature chained up like a wild beast, and, whenever he wanted her to do anything, applied a burning stick, a firebrand snatched from the hearth, to her skin."

It is a small satisfaction to be told that other nations have been as bad as ourselves: that a million of Caribs in Hispaniola



were reduced by the Spaniards to sixty thousand in fifteen years; that, according to Las Casas, fifteen millions of Indians perished at their hands; or that, as Cotton Mather reports of the English American Colonies: "Among the early settlers, it was considered a religious act to kill Indians." Some Spaniards made a vow to God to burn or hang every morning, for a certain time, thirteen Indians; one was to be in compliment to the Saviour, and the others to the twelve Apostles. A Spanish priest, as Vega relates, seeing some Peruvians destroy themselves rather than work in the mines, thus addressed the others: "You wish to hang yourselves, my friends, rather than labour; seeing this, I shall hang myself first; but I must warn you of one thing, which is this, that there are mines in the other world as well as in this; and I give you my word that I will make you work throughout eternity." Upon this the Indians threw themselves at his feet, and begged him not to kill himself.

There is a degree of simplicity of selfish injustice, in the following quotations from the diary of one of the early Dutch governors of the Cape Colony:—

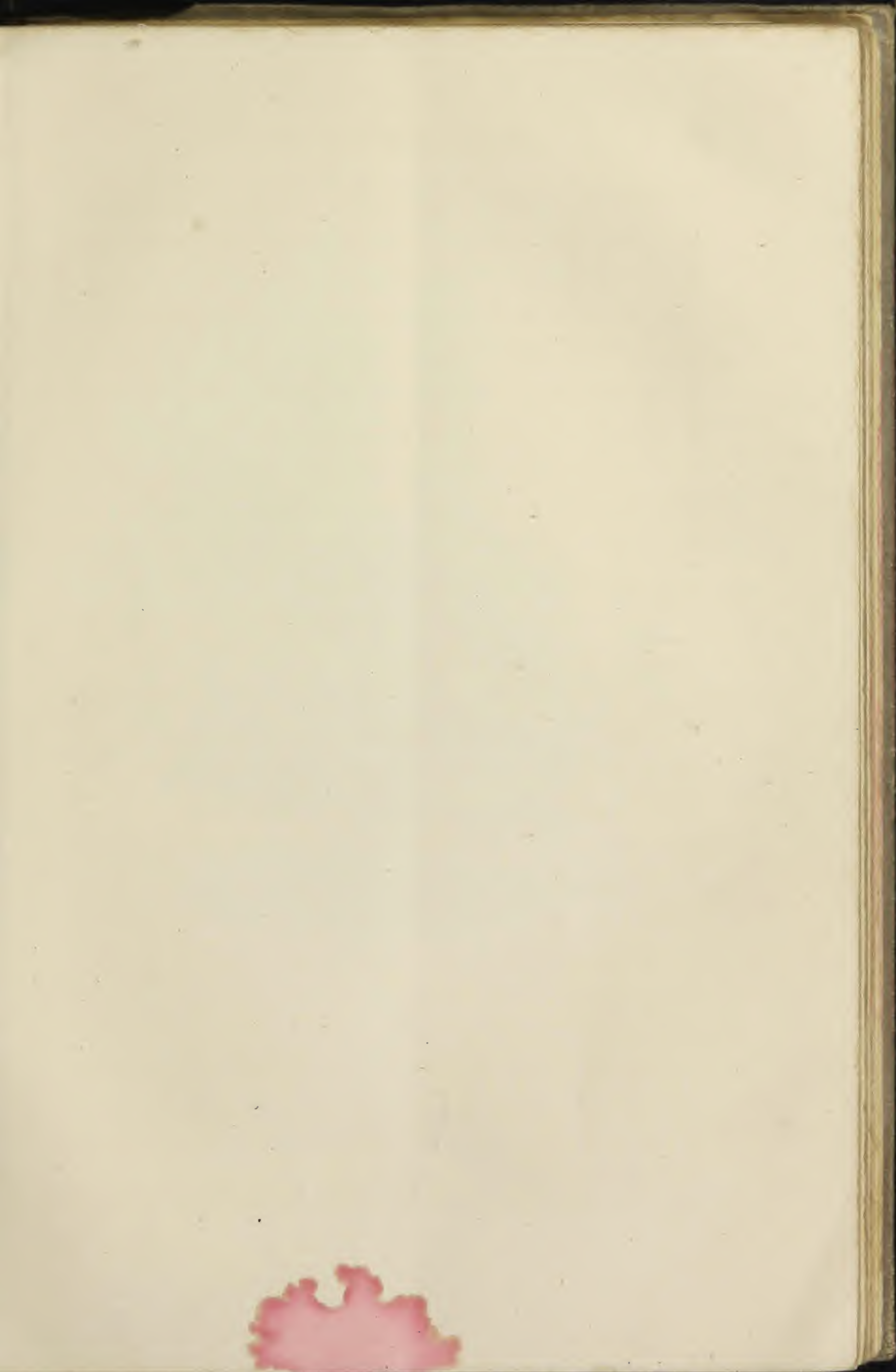
"December 3, 1652.—To-day, the Hottentots came with thousands of cattle and sheep close to our fort. We feel vexed to see so many fine herd of cattle, and not be able to buy to any considerable extent. With 150 men, 10,000 head of black cattle could be obtained without the danger of losing one man, and many savages might be taken without resistance, in order to be sent as slaves to India, as they still always come to us unarmed."

Commandoes of Dutch Boers against the native races were common enough. Even as recently as 1832, Lord Somerset had great difficulty in arresting the march of a party that had started for the destruction of a settlement of 5000 Christian Hottentots, on the Kat river.

It is painful to add this sorrow of the Race, that while the English Government in Van Diemen's Land issued paternal proclamations, and uttered sentiments of profound compassion for the Aborigines, little effectual energy was exerted to repress and punish crimes against them. The *Hobart Town Times* of April, 1836, is harsh, but not unjust, in the following sentences:—

"They have been murdered in cold blood. They have been









TASMANIAN GRAVES. *By Péron.*)



shot in the woods, and hunted down as beasts of prey. Their women have been contaminated, and then had their throats cut, or been shot, by the British residents, who would fain call themselves civilized people. The Government, too, by the common hangman, sacrificed the lives of such of the Aborigines as in retaliation destroyed their wholesale murderers, and the Government, to its shame be it recorded, in no one instance, on no single occasion, ever punished, or threatened to punish, the acknowledged murderers of the aboriginal inhabitants."

### THE WAR.

The "Black War of Van Diemen's Land" was a natural sequel to the events previously chronicled. The outraged Tasmanians were a bold and independent race, resenting an injury, though very feebly provided with means for avenging it. Their weapons were only sticks, whose wooden points were hardened in the fire, and waddies, which were rude clubs. They contended with men armed with guns and steel. Like all weak people, however brave, they depended more upon taking their foes at a disadvantage, than meeting them in the open field. They could come upon the lone hut in the wilds, could waylay the solitary bushman, could set fire to an ill-protected dwelling. If these are barbarous modes of warfare, they are similarly akin to civilized ones.

And yet, to the great honour of these poor savages, be it recorded, they were content to fight with men. Not a single instance in early days is recorded of the outrage of a white woman, and women and children were then very rarely killed. In our bombardments the weaker sex and little ones do not escape so easily.

It is charged against them that, in their fury, they often attacked the wrong party. When our frigates go to avenge a murder by natives, without inquiry as to the individual criminals or cause of outrage, the shots are directed against the village and the whole tribe. If civilized and Christian warriors act so, is it wonderful that heathen savages, personally injured, and not paid to slaughter, should fail to discriminate, and confound all who belong to the hated race.

Mr. Clark, Catechist to the remnant of the tribes, in a



letter to me, has this remark :—"They did much mischief prior to their removal from Van Diemen's Land, but it was from a feeling of retaliation, and also their imagining the Whites to be a distinct race of beings, against whom they were bound to make war after the first outbreak was produced." The Aborigines' Protection Committee of Hobart Town reported that "the injuries and insults which the Aborigines had received from dissolute characters had led them to a certain extent, in addition to their savage spirit, to wreak indiscriminate vengeance."

Colonel Arthur had a firm hand and a clear eye. As a Governor, he had difficulties beyond another. He was on the border of two ages. There was the past of convict discipline, and there was the future of free settlement. The rougher element had to be curbed by strong laws. The rising tide of intelligence and freedom was preparing to remove despotic obstructiveness. Bushranging violence was his trial on the one side, and the impatient cry of a chained press was his trouble on the other. His cup of disquietude was filled to the brim by the Native difficulty.

A Proclamation in June, 1824, rebuked the "settlers and others" who destroyed the tribesmen, then under British protection. An injury to them, said he, "shall be visited with the same punishment as though committed on the person and property of any other."

Words, words, and nothing more. The Blacks could not rely upon them, and the Whites laughed at them. It was well known that a native witness would not be heard.

Another *Government Notice* appeared, November 29th, 1826. His Excellency regretted the failure of his efforts at conciliation. But the attacks of the wild men must be repressed. If they show themselves in numbers, if they seem as though bent on some mischief, "any person may arm" to drive them away. Warrants are to be issued against known offenders. Force is to be used in the capture.

The law was vigorously enforced—against the Blacks. But while these were being shot down, or hanged, the Governor was protesting that he would "protect the Aborigines of the colony from injury or annoyance," even to the "severest penalties which the law may prescribe."

What colour were they? The legal fiction supposed them



*white*; holding that they were His Majesty's subjects, amenable to law, having a common right with Europeans to all the protection that law can afford. But they found themselves anything but *white* in reality. As nominal subjects, they could be treated as others if transgressing the statutes. It is true, they had never been consulted as to the adoption of British rule, had never been told that they were subjects of King George, had never been taught the duties of such a position, nor warned of what they should not do.

But they did understand the loss of freedom? The fairest parts of their country, most abounding in game and wild fruits, were in the possession of strangers, who drove them off as trespassers. They might take up their quarters in the stormy west, in the cloudland of rocks, in the silence of dense scrub, in any barren, in any inclement region not wanted by the Whites. When thus robbed of natural supplies of food, they were free to pine in famine; but to touch an animal feeding on pastures once held by kangaroos was a crime, and a crime resented by bullets. Except they dwelt with eagles on mountain-tops, they were liable to come in contact with white men. On the outskirts of civilization are ever found the rougher characters of our race. At a distance from authority, license prevails. Removed from moral agencies, the tendency is downward, and the passions have freer course. Borderers are seldom saints. The very absence of women, however coarse and degraded they may be, removes the last barrier to propriety among the reputed civilized. The prevalence of crime in this outer fringe of society is well recognized all over the world.

Now, in Van Diemen's Land, that fringe was largely composed of convict servants, ex-convict hunters, and a floating community of cattle-stealers, bushrangers, and runaway prisoners. With these, and these alone, the poor natives would be immediately in contact, if at any time compelled to retreat from inhospitable hills and forests. Would the association be safe or happy? The weapons provided for the chase or protection could be turned against them. The lawlessness of passion would seek gratification in native women, and too often accompanied with cruelty. Mere love of sport would drive shot among the naked ones. If the stealing of a lubra brought her husband, father or



brother to the rescue, it meant present murder, and future revenge. Whatever good there was in the native, such ill circumstances checked its growth; while all the evil would receive ample exercise.

Did the Tasmanian find the vaunted protection, or realize fair play from the law?

With the worst class, there was open war, and no quarter. But if near a settlement a wrong were done by either side, was justice meted out in due proportion? When flour was stolen by one of the tribe, was the offender treated as a subject? When a settler's servant was speared, was the captured murderer allowed the trial privileges of a subject? When the dark deed was done by the White, was the evidence of the subject, if a Black, ever accepted? Is it any wonder that the poor creatures felt, with such anomalies, that in the eyes of British law they were neither white nor black.

The times were, unhappily, far from merciful. Men in authority were annoyed at the complaints of settlers, exposed to the attacks of bushrangers, and were blamed by the Colonial Office for lack of discipline. Executions were common among the limited population of the island. At one sitting of the judges thirty-seven persons were sentenced to the scaffold. If so little was then thought of the hanging of Whites, would the shooting of Blacks be much considered?

The white-skinned British Islander seems to have a revulsion of feeling against any coloured people. In India, a young or petty English official will speak of an educated and a refined Hindoo, with forty centuries of civilized ancestors, as a *Nigger*. When the Maories, after they had become Christianized, engaged in arms against us, this was the counsel of a New Zealand paper:—"What are we to do with these bloodthirsty rebels? These men must be shown no mercy. They should be treated as wild beasts, hunted down, and slain. It does not matter what means are employed, so long as the work is done effectually. Head-money, blood-money, killing by contract; any of these means may be adopted."

Such was the feeling of a Christian Englishman towards the Brown men. Well might a Secretary for the Colonies exclaim in a despatch:—"With a view to the protection of



the Natives, the most essential step is to correct the temper and tone adopted toward them by the settlers."

The wars continued. Right-minded citizens were shocked. But one remedy remained for trial. The tribes, now scattered over the island, were all to be driven away from the located districts, and forced back to the more inaccessible regions. A *Line of Demarcation* was appointed. Across that they were not to come. In that cheerless western clime of everlasting rain or frost; that region of vast mountains, dreary morasses, and almost lifeless solitudes; a locality not sought by colonists, and nearly deserted by native fowl and quadruped—there were the dark-skinned race to dwell, banished from their summer home, their richer hunting-grounds, and far from the graves of their fathers.

All barbarous nations have their boundaries. Trespassing upon a neighbouring tribe's domain, unless permitted, was an occasion for war. The *Demarcation* Act thrust all the tribes pell mell upon each other. No distinction was made. And yet the very preamble of the Proclamation of April 15th, 1828, indicates clearly the occasion of all the mischief:—

"Whereas, and since the primary Settlement of the country, various acts of aggression, violence, and cruelty have been, from different causes, committed on the Aboriginal Inhabitants of this Island, by Subjects of His Majesty."

These wrongs are described, as well as the predatory incursions upon Settlers. The Governor declares his intention, for the safety of both parties, and with the hope of inducing the Natives to adopt habits of labour, "to regulate and restrain the intercourse between the Whites and the Coloured Inhabitants of this Colony." The latter were to be "expelled by force from all the therein districts," if not *persuaded* to retire. Military posts were to be established along the Line of Demarcation. Once a year, however, for a brief season, the poor creatures might procure official passports to enable them to gather shellfish on the eastern coast.

Posters were duly stuck on gum trees in the forest, giving these particulars. Yet what did the Blacks know of a passport? Would they be ready to come and ask for it? Were they sure that the gentle shepherd of the plains would respect the Proclamation or the passport?

The British Ministry urged the Governor to use no



unnecessary harshness in driving back the people. For all this, matters went on as usual. Murders and outrages continued. The Natives were still at large. What could be done? Only issue a fresh Proclamation.

On the first of November, 1828, men read on the official poster, that "It seems at present impossible to conciliate the several tribes of that people." Even the order for them to retire to the gameless solitudes did not *conciliate* them. And so "Martial Law" was proclaimed against all Blacks found anywhere but in these localities, namely, the scrub to the southwest, Bruni Island, Tasman's Peninsula, the rocky north-west corner, and all westward of the Huon river and the Western Bluff.

As Van Diemen's Land had no proper survey in those days, it would have been impossible for colonists to note some of these boundaries, much less the dark kangaroo hunter. The absurdity was thus shown by a Hobart Town paper, in the form of an imaginary dialogue between the Governor and Tom, an aborigine brought up among Whites from childhood :

*Tom.*—"A'nt your stock-keeper bein' a kill plenty black fellow?

*Governor.*—"But your countrymen kill people that never did them any harm—they even kill women and children.

*Tom.*—"Well, a'nt that all same's white un? A'nt he kill plenty black un, a woman, and little picaninny too?

*Governor.*—"But you know, Tom, I want to be friendly and kind to them, yet they would spear me if they met me.

*Tom* (laughing).—"How he tell you make a friend along him? A'nt he all same a white un? 'Pose black un kill white fellow, a'nt you send all your soddier, all your constable after him? You say, that black a devil kill a nurra white man; go—catch it—kill it—a'nt he then kill all black fellow he see, all picaninny too? A'nt dat all same black fellow—a'nt you been a take him own kangaroo ground? How den he like?"

Tom laughed most immoderately on hearing the proclamation read, particularly at the idea of the tribes applying for passports to travel through the settled districts.

Tom says—"You been a make a proflamation—ha! ha! ha! I never see dat foolish (meaning, I never saw anything



so foolish). When he see dat? He can't read; who tell him?

*Governor.*—"Can't you tell him, Tom?"

*Tom.*—"No! me like see you tell him yourself; he very soon spear me!"

It was admitted at last by the official mind that as Blacks could not read the posters, and no White fellow would risk his life in explaining the contents to the spearmen, that the Demarcation Order was useless.

A grand expedient was then to be tried. Nobody doubted that the Natives had excellent eyesight, were quick of discernment, and were possessed of some imaginative power. As we Europeans are so impressed by pictures, how much more would the children of the forest be! Because the printer failed to make himself understood, let the painter try his art.

And what was the daub to be about?

It should declare that the Governor loved his black subjects as well as his white ones; that he longed for Blacks and Whites to be loving each other; that he would hang the murderers of the Natives not less than the slaughterers of Europeans. Deal boards, after undergoing the operation of colouring—blazing in red, white, and black—were to be suspended in the Bush for the edification of wanderers.

The displayed *Pictorial Proclamation* tells this pretty tale. It is copied from the illustrated boarding found under the floor of old Government House, in Macquarie Street, opposite Elizabeth Street, when the building was being pulled down many years ago.

This was not the only time on which this primitive mode of communication was practised. The Surveyor-General, in 1830, sent by the hand of a semi-civilized Aborigine a sketch to show his countrymen. In one part, redcoats were firing upon the naked foresters; in another, well-clothed Natives were receiving food from white friends. The moral is obvious—to us.

A new departure next took place. All Blacks who would not keep the bounds were to be caught and brought in by persons duly authorized for the task, and paid according to the system of results. The *Order* was issued toward the



close of 1828, and was in force for several years afterwards. A reward of five pounds was offered for the capture of an adult, two pounds for a child. "Capture parties," as they were termed, were thus originated. There were promises of grants of land to successful capturers. The Governor thought he could by this means put an end to the evil, and with the least cost of life.

For a time the plan seemed to work well, as country settlers enjoyed a sense of security unknown for years before. His Excellency was delighted at the agreeable prospect of peace. But all at once the war broke out more fiercely than ever.

When a vessel is caught in a cyclone, and whirled onward awhile in the rushing storm, it appears to come suddenly out of the strife, beneath a placid portion of the heavens, and rides quite in tranquillity. Yet soon it is seized again by the waltzing tornado, and borne along the destructive cycloid curve in maddening fury. So was it with this Native trouble. The temporary calmness preceded a renewed convulsion. The slumbering anger of the tribes awoke in a series of attacks upon out-stations and solitary individuals, as excited the utmost alarm throughout the country.

Colonel Arthur promptly answered the appeal for succour. Another Proclamation came forth, breathing fire and death. This was intended for Whites to read. As the Natives would not accept his conditions, and be content quietly to die of cold and hunger in the sterile wilderness;—as they used their sanctioned retreats as fortresses from which sorties were made against their foes, to which, also, they fled upon the commission of a crime;—and as it was so difficult to discriminate the guilty, — MARTIAL LAW was to be in force against all in every part of the island, saving those few known to be dwelling with the Europeans. Such Martial Law existed till October 24, 1833.

To whatever extent provoked by wrongs of long standing, it must be allowed that the Wild Men were no contemptible enemies. A few hundreds only against the thousands, with pointed sticks against fire-arms, they made so bold a stand, returned such blows for blows, that had they been called Highlanders of European clime, their heroism would have given subjects for poets' lays, and in their final fall had



honour from their very victors. But they happened to be mere naked forest-runners of Van Diemen's Land. Their attacks were called *outrages*; the lives taken were styled *murders*. The British attacks on them were known as *police measures*; the deaths from their arm were *justifiable homicides*. Infamy is, after all, attached more to the names of deeds than to the deeds themselves.

And yet the Blacks were timid before a courageous front. Old Kemp told me that in 1821 he saw about three hundred of them, *poking*, as he called it, after bandicoots. Alarmed at the number, he started his dogs at them; and, upon the flight of the hunters, he cleared off hastily himself.

In one of my Australian rambles I fell in with an "Old Hand," who had thoroughly redeemed his character, having been then for above twenty years a consistent member of the Wesleyan Church. The conviction of this man was similar to others—that the Natives were not the aggressors. He had lived under the Western Tier for three or four years without molestation, though constantly moving about the Bush after stock. Frequently has he come upon their recent tracks, and must have been the object of their observation, without catching sight of any. When aroused to fury at last, the tribe acted as others had done previously, committing atrocious and indiscriminate slaughter. Missing his shepherd-mate one day, he entered upon a search, and came upon his body pierced with several spears. His fears were excited on behalf of a poor sick shepherd, who lay in a hut belonging to a Mr. Bryant. Collecting a party of neighbours, he made a hasty run to the spot. When about 300 yards from the hut, they met Mr. Bryant running rapidly with torn dress. From him they learned that the Blacks arrived there soon after he came to visit his sick servant; that, after forcibly breaking off the ends of spears, thrust at him through the window, he had made a desperate rush through the mob, and had thus escaped. The rescuers went on to the hut. Not a Black was to be seen. They entered, and found their friend in his last agonies, with a quantity of wood burning under his bed, the men having fired that as well as the bark of the roof.

The rapid movements of the Blacks were extraordinary. Fifty miles a day must have been often traversed by them



in the height of the war. It was during that war that settlers noticed a marked decrease of children. This arose from the policy of the tribes, who, finding themselves hard-pressed by the company of the young in their marches, and who feared the betrayal of their haunts by the cry of a little one, had most relentlessly resolved upon the destruction of their families. Mothers even were known to murder their own babes, rather than have them fall into the hands of their implacable enemies.

Mrs. Meredith records two or three sad Tasmanian tales. In the year 1826, some parties in the Bush noticed a man staggering along with groping arms. As they neared the object, they were shocked to perceive the poor creature with battered head and speared body, and the sores swarming with maggots. One of his eyes was knocked out, and the other was totally blind from a blow. In a few words the unhappy man moaned forth his story. He had received a spear in his breast, while endeavouring to get away from a mob. This after some difficulty he extracted, and ran on again. Another pierced his back, and broke short off in the wound. Sickening with pain, his step faltered, and the savages reached him. Several spears were thrust into him, and waddies played heavily about his head. He was left for dead. Reviving, he made an effort to reach some settlement, and so fell in with the party. Upon further conversation, the rescuers were horrified at discovering that the attack had taken place three days before; the time accounted for the dreadful condition of his wounds. He was conveyed to the hospital, but death soon released him from suffering.

One Josiah Gough lived with his wife and two girls in a remote part of the interior. Becoming alarmed for the safety of his family, he went off to the town to procure assistance to remove them to a place of safety. While away, the Natives stole down the chimney into the hut, speared, and then brained, the poor woman, and cruelly waddied the children. Taking what they desired, the murderers withdrew. The father soon after arrived, and heard the sad tale from the dying lips of his surviving girl. We cannot be surprised at some fearful retaliation by the neighbours. In 1827, a farmhouse was attacked, under similar circumstances, when the master had gone for a military party.



The wife, daughter, two sons, a servant, and a traveller, were in the hut when the barbarians surrounded it with their mad cries for blood. The armed inmates defended themselves with much courage and coolness; the conduct of one of the boys was quite heroic. The contest continued for some time, when the enraged Blacks set fire to the thatch of the roof, to drive out the family, that they might be more readily and certainly destroyed. At this critical period, a dozen soldiers appeared through the forest, and soon put the tribe to flight.

So rancorous was the hatred of the Natives against the Whites, that every expedient was adopted to carry out their malevolent purpose, and torments were used with almost an Indian refinement of cruelty. In the early days, as the men, the servants especially, only wore a sort of moccasin of kangaroo skin, sharp stones and pointed burnt sticks were set up into paths known to be passed, so as to pierce the feet. The most abominable atrocities were perpetrated upon some victims' bodies. But this was adopted for the purpose of exhibiting their deadly animosity against the Europeans for their treatment of the native women, and was a terrible retaliation for similar cruelties practised upon the male Blacks. Some of our countrymen were emasculated, and the dying were often given up to the torturing hand of the gins, who, with sharp stones upon secret parts, added poignancy to the last agony. Several Bush hands have told me such stories, unfit for publication, but all evidencing the Blacks' deep-rooted spirit of revenge.

The object of some of these outrages was clearly personal revenge. Thus, a leading settler of Swanport had his house beset by the wild East Mob. The party within were well armed, and maintained the siege with great spirit. One man managed to evade the observation of the leaguers, and set off at full speed to give the alarm at the nearest military post, Pittwater, fifty-four miles off. He was in such a fright, that by the time he reached the town of Sorell his hair had turned completely grey. Assistance was rapidly forwarded, and the siege was raised, though murders in the neighbourhood continued for a long time after. Much discussion ensued as to the reason of this attack by Natives with whom the settler had always been on the most friendly terms, and



for whom a number of them had often been employed. As usual, it was set down to the natural *devilment* of the Blacks, and no means were spared to extirpate them in that part. Some twenty years after this, my informant, who had been previously acquainted with the facts, stopped for the night at a roadside inn. Among the callers was one who, under the excitement of liquor, was detailing some portions of his early history, and especially his exploits with the *Black Crows*, as he called them. The gentleman took no particular interest in the narrative until he heard particulars of the outrage to which we have just alluded, and the explanation of what had at the time appeared to be so enigmatical as to the attack. According to the testimony of this story-teller, he had been out shooting with his father. Spying a black fellow behind a tree, the young fellow cried out to his father that he had got a capital mark for a shot. The settler reproved the wanton cruelty of his son, and told him to go home. The other resolved, however, not to be cheated out of his sport; so, watching until his parent had retired, he took aim at the inoffensive native and dropped him dead at once. Of course, he never told at the house what he had done. It was only two or three days after that that the attack upon the premises took place, and thus the wicked conduct of the lad had nearly caused the destruction of all his family.

Many narrow escapes are recorded. A stock-rider found himself suddenly beset by a mob in the Abyssinian Marshes. Rising in his stirrups, and setting spurs to his horse, he charged in upon the masses with his formidable weapon, the stock-whip. Loud cries followed his rapidly administered strokes, and the field became his own.

But occasionally they found even females too much for them. Between Lovely Banks and Spring Hill, some forty miles north of Hobart Town, a beautifully-wooded region, there dwelt in the olden times a worthy settler upon a moderate-sized farm. Taking advantage of his temporary absence from home with his two men, the ever-watchful Natives descended from the Tiers. The mother was alone with her two children, a boy and a girl. Being washing-day, a large pot or billy of water was suspended from the chimney-hook over the fire. Immediately upon the cry of



"the Blacks," they all rushed into the house, but not before the little boy received a severe wound in his leg. Nothing daunted, the family prepared for resistance, knowing if they could hold out for an hour or two the father would return. The poor mother, then within three weeks of her confinement, seized a gun from over the mantelpiece, and fired at the assailants. Then, keeping watch at an opening in the wall, she waited until her suffering boy had charged the weapon, when she again sent its contents among the cowardly band. This was repeated time after time, the brave boy assiduously helping his noble mother, regardless of his own wound.

Thus unexpectedly repulsed, the enemy prepared another and more dreadful mode of attack. Fiery *Wing-wangs*, of lighted bark, were hurled against the bark roof of the hut, while, taking advantage of the withdrawal of attention of the inmates, they made a new rush to the door. But here commenced the heroism of the little girl, who, bidding her mother keep to her post, calmly and resolutely took her station by the fireplace, and with her pannikin at the billy steadily threw water upward upon the ignited bark. The mother, in the meanwhile, dealt another and another blow upon the savages. The contest had thus continued for hours when, to the great joy of the wearied and suffering besieged, the report of guns outside reached their ears. The enemy disappeared, and the fainting wife was soon in the arms of her delivering partner. Governor Arthur was so pleased with the heroism of the woman, that he presented her with a grant of three hundred acres of land, and undertook to provide for the future of the brave boy and girl.

A man who had before been brick-making for Mr Robinson, the Apostle of the Blacks, and whom I found twenty-seven years ago still making bricks, though then by the Yarra-Yarra, gave me some incidents of his career in the island *over the way*. He spoke of a party out kangarooing who came upon a mob rather suddenly. A fine, tall, naked chieftain was shot, and the others fled shrieking over the Fourteen-Tree Plains. A boy and girl, dropped in the flight, were picked up by the pursuers, and afterwards found themselves at the Orphan School, New Town.

An old carter once told me that he was assigned to a



person at Flat-top Tier, some twenty miles from Hobart Town. One morning the cook of the hut had gone down to the creek for water, to prepare the supper of the expected shepherds, when the Natives came down from the Tier and speared him. The men returning homeward found their meal unprepared, and the hut vacant. When the body of the murdered man was discovered, they seized their guns and set off in pursuit of the tribe. After a long and vain chase they returned to their quarters, and, to their consternation, found the hut burnt to the ground.

An ex-bushranger gave me the intelligence that he had been once followed by the Blacks for two or three miles. When out of breath, he halted behind a tree, and presented his gun to keep the others in check. A party of the Ouse Mob burnt down the hut of a shepherd and murdered the owner. They were about to destroy his daughter, when the girl fell upon her knees, and in piteous accents sought their mercy. Their savage hearts were softened, and the orphan was suffered to escape. Captain Gray, of Avoca, was often seen standing over his threshold with a loaded musket. Men regularly took out their guns with them when they went to plough, sticking the weapon against some stump in the field.

In the primitive days it was the custom for the rations of flour to be kept in an uncovered cask in the hut. Robberies would thus be effected. A shirted black fellow would approach, and smilingly enter upon a jabber with the inmate; all the while seemingly just fingering the flour, while in reality he was quietly conveying it by a rapid and clever movement up his sleeve. The story is told of a certain chief who was rather remorselessly making free with the contents of a barrel, when he suddenly gave a yell, and withdrew his arm minus his hand. The shrewd farmer had planted a strong steel trap in the flour, which had thus seized upon the thief. Years after this man was one of those conveyed to Flinders' Island. He never liked an allusion to the playful accident of former years. He was described to me by a Government officer as always keeping the injured arm secreted under his blanket or rug, and as looking uncommonly sulky when asked why he did not eat with that other hand.

Some incidents remind one strongly of the struggles of



the American colonists when they encountered the enmity of the Red Indian. Then the pine forest was cleared by the axe, with the gun slung over the shoulder. The Block-house was the village fort, to which in times of pressing emergency the inhabitants retreated from their malignant foe. Every river, hill, and township has its traditionary tale of horrors. For awhile, so imminent was the danger, that hope of permanent settlement of the country was well-nigh abandoned. There, too, as in Tasmania, the outrages of the Aborigines could be traced in most cases to the frauds and cruelties practised upon the tribes by unprincipled Whites. There, too, as in the southern isle, indiscriminate attack and slaughter followed the perpetration of crime by the individual. The civilized colonists acted upon the same principle, and dealt wide blows as a return for the faults of the few. The like practice existed among the rude and cannibal Fiji islanders. The secret crime of one man was revenged upon the whole tribe. It was so among the New Zealanders. The same law existed among the ancient Israelites, and the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish people. Even now, in too many instances, is society called upon to suffer for the misdemeanour of the individual.

While the woods echoed with discharges of musketry against the Natives, many a cry arose from terror-stricken hut-keepers. On the 13th of March, 1829, a Mr. Miller was returning to his homestead on the east bank of the North Esk, when he saw Natives on the farm. He ran to his neighbours for help, and then beheld a scene of horror. One man lay dead twenty yards from the house, while another was found with dislocated neck and with eleven spears in his body. Entering his dwelling, with unspeakable anxiety, the farmer saw his wife a dreadful object upon the bed, her brains having been dashed out by a waddy blow. Sugar, flour, powder, and clothes had been taken away.

Two prisoner stockmen were attacked by a large mob on York Plains, on the northern side of the island. For five hours, by shots and a bold front, they kept the foes at bay. But when the long grass was fired by the miscreants, and the wind drove smoke and flame over them, the Bushmen ran for their lives, and did not obtain assistance till half an hour had passed. These, and other convict servants, felt it to be



a hard case that they should be thus exposed to continual terror, while protecting the property of the masters to whom they were assigned as little better than slaves, and subject to be severely flogged for any supposed neglect of duty. As one very properly observed, that on being sentenced to transportation, it was not a part of the punishment that they were to be exposed to the chance of being speared by savages.

Within six years, 121 outrages by the Blacks were recorded in Oatlands (central) district alone. Mr. Anstey, P.M. of Oatlands, held twenty-one inquests upon murdered persons between 1827 and 1830. I was informed that there were in the Public Office one thousand pages of MSS. upon these inquests and outrages.

It is very grievous to hear of children suffering. In a valley among the tiers of the central interior, and not far from Jericho, lived a farmer named Hooper, with his wife and seven children. The Blacks, for reasons not explained, waited three days to catch the man away from his house without his gun. When helpless, he was surrounded, and killed. The others then proceeded to the log-hut, and destroyed all its inmates. Another farmer, residing in one of the most secluded parts of the island, called "The Den," had gone into his fields to labour, leaving behind his wife who had recently been delivered of twins. Looking back, he fancied he saw the door of his place opened and shut too quickly. He feared the worst, and ran home. He arrived to find his beloved ones bathed in their blood, by the spear and waddy wounds they had received.

A woman named Walloa, gin to a chief in the north-west, became a terrible foe to the Whites. She had been stolen by a sealer, and learned on the island in the Straits to use fire-arms. Ultimately she escaped, and returned to her tribe. Her nature was changed by her cruel bondage, and her spirit of contradiction and vehemence made such quarrels among her people, that they permitted another sealer to have her. Again escaping, she raised a band of discontented, or heroic spirits, and led them to every species of outrageous cruelty against the solitary dwellers of huts. She boasted of her bloody work among the "Black Snakes," as she termed her European foes.

A characteristic tale of the times had long ago been sent to



me by Dr. G. F. Story, of Swanport, an excellent member of the Society of Friends in Tasmania, whose friendship I formed forty years ago in Hobart Town. He had been giving me an account of some ancient wrongs of the settlers, and appended this narrative to his letter, obtaining his information from the daughter of the gentleman who suffered from marauding violence.

"Having seen to-day," he proceeds, "one of Thomas Buxton's daughters, she has given me a rather different account of the attack by the Natives at Mayfield. The Natives encamped in the morning on the other side of the river, and opposite to Thomas Buxton's hut, built of sods. Some of them came across to the hut and said that all the party were tame Blacks, not wild ones, meaning they were all peaceable. At this time the Natives had learnt to speak English. They asked the Buxtons to come over to their camp, and have 'a yarn.' After dinner two of the daughters took the cows to a marsh a quarter of a mile distant, and from thence saw the Natives showing signs of warfare. Balawinna, the head of the tribe, a tall, strong man, nearly six feet high, was marked with the red ochre. They ran to tell their mother, who immediately called her husband and three other men, who had gone to cut some thatch for a stack of wheat they had just got together (a small, and their only stack, for they had been but a short time there). In the mean time the Natives had crawled up to the hut, and almost stripped it, taking also two guns, the only ones they possessed. The last Native was leaving the hut with a loaf of bread when Thomas Buxton entered, and caught him round the neck, and made him drop the loaf. The other men were speared before they could get to the hut. The Natives having taken the plunder to their camp, and knowing there were no more guns, came up boldly again, and one of them was about lighting a stick at a fire that was outside the hut for cooking. But it happened that a pistol was put away by one of the daughters, and this having been loaded T. B. fired at the Black who was going to the fire. Then the Natives took their wounded man away, and tried to throw firesticks at the thatch. But T. B., having cut port-holes in the hut, stationed the children and men at the holes to watch: and when any approached, the pistol was poked out at the hole.



When night came the Blacks retired up the creek, and made a fire for the night. T. B. despatched a man to Waterloo Point for help, and George Meredith, jun., and some men came before morning. In the morning the Natives came again; and one with a firestick fixed to his spear came to the hut, and threw it on the stack of wheat. When those in the hut saw what the Blacks had done, they rushed out with their guns. The Natives, seeing the men with guns, immediately made off. The wheat was saved. At night the fire of the Natives was seen up the creek, and the party going to it, killed several of the Blacks, and recovered some of the plunder."

Dr. Story's own experience is related thus:—"We commenced settling at Kelvedon in 1829; Francis Cotton, his family, and myself living at Waterloo Point, the military station, until a hut should be built and some land cleared. Three men were employed in clearing a piece of land for the garden and homestead, living in a hut on the creek side. Whilst at breakfast one morning they observed the bullocks come running to the hut, as if something had frightened them; but, not thinking of the Natives, took no further notice of it. [Domestic animals were terrified at the Blacks.] The men went as usual to their work, taking with them their guns, and placing them at the butt of a tree that had fallen, and commenced lopping off the branches to burn up the trunk. Whilst thus engaged, one of them [Jones] looked up, and to his dismay saw the Blacks approaching, and one even handling the guns. He called out to his companions, threw his axe at a Black that was approaching him, and fled. Now the piece of land they were working on was thick with trees. There was a lagoon betwixt it and the sea-beach, and a creek on either side. On the north side the men's hut stood. Jones, in running away, received some spears into his body, which he managed to extract, and crossed the lagoon; as did also Rogers, who was also speared. The other man, Flack, jumped over the north creek, and escaped unhurt, though very much frightened. The Blacks, not liking to cross the lagoon, had to go round it. Jones got away from them by this means, but Rogers was followed by one more persevering than the rest on to the sea-beach, Rogers keeping close to the surf, while the Black ran alongside, every now and then throwing his waddy at him. But Rogers, being a London lad, dexterously



dodged his head, and the waddy went into the water. Thus they went on until, at the end of the beach, the Black became exhausted and gave up the pursuit. Jones by this time had got some distance on his road to Waterloo Point, when he met his master coming as usual to see after the workmen; and addressed him with, 'Oh, Master! make haste and get back! The Blacks are after us. They have killed Rogers.' Francis Cotton immediately turned, and reported it to the Commandant, and the military and constables were sent to the spot. But although I was with the sergeant, the first to arrive, there was not a trace of them could be seen. They had stripped the hut of everything, and taken away two kangaroo dogs. One of these dogs returned after two or three days, badly wounded with spears. The other we supposed they had kept, as he was of a milder disposition. However it may have been, we never saw him again. The two men were ill some time with their wounds.

"The inhabitants were kept in constant alarm by the repeated attacks of the Blacks, which called forth the sympathies of the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Arthur, yet no means could be devised to rid the country of such a fearful scourge. They had a great antipathy to the *Redcoats*; and no soldier, when sent on escort, or other duty, was allowed to go alone, never less than two were sent together. For the protection of the inhabitants several stations were formed, where two or more soldiers were placed. A soldier at one of these stations, called Boomer Creek, was sitting amongst some young wattles, peeling the twigs for a bird cage, when the Natives stole upon and beat him to death with their waddies. Two sawyers were at work at their pit near Mayfield House, when the Blacks came upon them. They, however, escaped to the house; but one was so terrified that he fell into a fever, and died. So great a terror did they strike into the Europeans, that, notwithstanding their physical superiority, they were unable, through fear, to defend themselves."

One of the most charming retreats known to me in Tasmania is on the banks of the Clyde. Mr. Glover, the distinguished artist, has left us some sketches of this romantic part of the interior. Twelve years before my visit to the beautiful home of Mr. Sherwin, the Natives had attacked the homestead of that gentleman. The outbuildings, and even the house itself,



were fired by the tribe. While the farm-servants were busy in moving the flour from the burning store, the shrewd Blacks set fire to a neighbouring fence, by way of distracting the attention of the servants, and giving themselves easier access to the great object of attack,—the flour-bag. As usual, they did not remain to fight. They fired the premises, less as a measure of offence, than as a means of securing plunder. This partially secured, the band hastily retreated to the forest, and the unhappy settler mourned the loss of his property.

So bold an outrage excited the fears of the colonists, and increased that sense of insecurity which troubled every Bush household. The pen of the ready writer, the Governor, was instantly put in motion, and a formidable *Order* appeared in the *Gazette*, February 25th, 1830. After a detail of the circumstances on the Clyde, His Excellency assured his people that such outrages

“Demand simultaneous and energetic proceeding on the part of the settlers, who, it is to be regretted, have hitherto been too indifferent to the adoption of those obvious measures of protection, which are more or less within the means of almost every individual.”

The murder of Captain Thomas and his overseer, Mr. Parker, excited much interest in 1831. Captain Thomas was agent for the Van Diemen's Land Company's Establishment, and was well known to the Port Sorell tribe of his neighbourhood. The bodies of both gentlemen were found about a fortnight after they had been speared to death. The jury, at the inquest, returned this verdict: “We find that Bartholomew Boyle, Thomas and James Parker have been treacherously murdered by the three Black Natives now in custody, aided and assisted by the residue of the tribe to which they belonged, known by the name of the Big River tribe, during the most friendly intercourse, whilst endeavouring to carry into effect the conciliatory measures recommended by the Government.” The only evidence procured was that of a native woman, who professed to have been present at the murder.

One of the most stirring incidents in the history of the war is given in an official communication to the Colonial Secretary, dated August 25th, 1831, by Captain Moriarty, so well known and respected afterwards in the port of Hobart



Town. It narrates the circumstances attending an attack upon an isolated homestead, and exhibits the heroism of a half-caste, Dalrymple Briggs. She was so named from being born at Port Dalrymple, and was the first of her race on the northern side. She had married a settler in the interior, and, in her contention with the Natives, forgot the blood of her own race, in her feelings as a wife and a mother. For six long hours did she sustain a siege, and nobly did she defend her position. It is customary for the historian to describe the strength of the beleaguered place, when detailing a succession of assaults. Our heroine fought behind no granite wall, nor was she shielded by a bomb-proof roof. Her castle was a simple slab hut; though the bark roof, fortunately for her, had been covered with a thick coating of mud and lime to keep out the weather. The story will be better told in the Captain's words:—

“There was no person in the hut, when the Natives first appeared, but a woman named Dalrymple Briggs, with her two female children, who, hearing some little noise outside, sent the elder child to see what was the matter, and hearing her shriek went out with a musket. On reaching the door, she found the poor child had been speared. The spear entered close up in the inner part of the thigh, and had been driven so far through as to create a momentary difficulty in securing the child from its catching against either door-post. Having effected this object, she barricaded the doors and windows, and availed herself of every opportunity to fire at the assailants, but—as they kept very close either to the chimney, or the stumps around the hut, and she had nothing but duck shot—with little effect, though she imagines she hit one of them. Their plan was evidently to pull down the chimney, and thus effect an entrance; but they were intimidated by her resolution. Finding this fail, they went off, and returned in about an hour. This interval had been employed by them in procuring materials and forming faggots, which, on their return, they kept lighting and throwing on the roof (to windward), with a view to burn her out. She, however, shook them off as fast as they threw them on, and maintained her position with admirable composure, till the return of Thomas Johnson, the stock-keeper, pointed out to them the necessity of a retreat.”



So noble a defence called forth the warmest expressions of applause. The Governor was not the last to acknowledge her heroic conduct.

There is a story told, in connection with the early American settlements, of a man whose house had been attacked by Indians during his absence, and who returned to find the ghastly remains of his wife and children amidst the smouldering embers of his hut. It was said that the man there and then solemnly devoted the rest of his life to revenge. Alone, he followed the trail of the savages. In silence he pursued the murderers of his family. Feverish with excitement, worn by fatigue, ill through exposure, he still went on, year after year, dealing a sure but stealthy blow upon any of the copper coloured tribes. All attempts to divert his purpose were unavailing. He visited the settlements but to gain a fresh supply of ammunition. He said nothing of his exploits, though the Border rang with his deeds; and the Indians whispered low, as they spoke of the White-hairs sheltered by the Manitou from their scalping-knives. Something similar might be told of some in Van Diemen's Land, who had lost kindred by attack, and who, vowing vengeance against the whole race of Natives, were unsatiated by slaughter, and unrelenting in revenge.

It was lucky for one poor fellow that the Natives enjoy a sense of the ridiculous. A shepherd of Jerusalem—which lies in a carboniferous region, with the greenstone covering the coal, and not far from Jericho and the River Jordan—being oppressed with the indolence of his occupation, and the heat of the day, placed his gun against a tree and fell asleep. Some Blacks came softly round, took away the weapon, and, with a loud simultaneous shout, startled the Bushman from his dreams. He jumped up in a great fright, saw the Natives around, missed his gun, and stared in such indescribable confusion, that the risible faculties of the robbers were much excited; and so, after a hearty laugh at their intended victim, they permitted him to leave in safety.

In one of the most charming spots of Bagdad—the seat of an ancient overflow of basalt on the palæozoic floor, and, therefore, a fertile district now—was a farm belonging to Mr. Espie. One day the tribe attacked the overseer, a man of energy and tact. Quickly closing the door, and shouting



loudly, he brought down one marauder with a shot. Then, through holes in the slab sides of the hut he continued to fire, calling out in simulated voices, as if several were with him, and more than once letting part of his body be seen with a changed coat or cap, to impress the enemy with a sense of his strength of support. The *ruse* succeeded, and the discomfited warriors departed.

Old George, whom I saw at Casterton, on the picturesque banks of the Glenelg of Victoria, is my informant for a story. In 1821 the Blacks in his neighbourhood, beyond the Norfolk Plains of the expatriated Norfolk Islanders, were very quiet and harmless. But a new overseer arriving at the station, a pretty *gin* was demanded. The chief, her husband, expostulated with the Englishman, but was brutally knocked down with the butt-end of a musket, and the tribe were forcibly driven off. "From that time," said George, "they became regular tigers, and speared right and left."

Plunder was the primary object of attack. But many a hut was stripped by convict servants and others, and the offence charged upon the Aborigines. Mr. John Batman relates several instances of unfounded accusations. A letter from Ben Lomond, also, says:—"The report in the *Colonial Times* respecting the Natives plundering Mr. Bostock's shepherd is entirely false; and I am sorry to say similar falsehoods are daily spread, which oftentimes leads the parties astray who are in pursuit of the Blacks. Not a Black has been seen in these parts for two months past."

An old settler of the interior once told me that he had been confined to his bed with a splinter in his foot. Hearing Natives *coo-ey*, he sent a lad to reconnoitre, with injunctions to return, and not to call out. The lad was terrified, and hid himself. Johnstone got up, and looked out upon the advancing party. Forgetting his lameness, he rushed out and ran four miles off to Salt Pan Plains to where a shepherd kept a flock. The splinter came up through his foot with the violence of his running, but without his consciousness. Another informed me that he escaped through wearing an old shirt. His hut had been fired, and, as he tried to escape, he was seized by his shirt sleeve. The piece gave away, and he managed to get clear off.

A fine hill rises suddenly from the plain at the junction of



the Blackman and Macquarie rivers, and goes by the name of Don's Battery. A man, called Don, being chased by some Natives, reached this rampart, and from its top defended himself for hours with such courage and success, that the wearied attacking mob left him the victor.

The most remarkable circumstance connected with the Black War is this, that though the native women had been so cruelly treated by the Whites, the male Aborigines, though ready to inflict death by the spear, singularly enough abstained from outrages upon the persons of our females. A good authority has distinctly stated, "*In all the incursions made by the Blacks into the settlements, it has never been known that a single white woman has been violated by any of them.*" The only approach to this crime has been made by the half-civilized Natives, who invariably became the greatest ruffians in the war. It would seem that not until they became acquainted with the usages of *Christians* in warfare, could they be guilty of the atrocities that have stained the arms of Europe even in Christian lands themselves. The horrors of the Peninsular War and Thirty Years' War were heightened by this dreadful addition to the sufferings of women.

Spear-wounds, inflicted by a sharpened point of wood, were far from being so severe as others, and in most cases, when not mortal, rapidly healed. The stick could be often withdrawn without the fatal consequences of the removal of the javelin from the breast of Epaminondas. Marvellous stories are given of the recovery of men left for dead, when transfixed by several spears.

Near the banks of the classic Isis, and within view of the snow-clad Ben Lomond, stood Ellenthorpe Hall, the Ladies' Boarding School of the period, and conducted by Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Clark. Being situated in a lonely place, about half-way from Hobart Town to Launceston, some alarm was experienced by parents at a distance, lest their daughters should be forcibly carried off by the Bush warriors. As a means of protection, a military station was formed in its neighbourhood, so that Venus could be shielded by Mars. From Mr. Clark I learned some tales of the past.

When I stood at the head of the Jordan, near Jericho, which was then particularly infested with thieves,—for a



probation party of several hundreds then occupied a position in that bleak retreat,—I heard a series of bloody tales from Mr. Salmon of that district. It was there, near Lemon's Lagoon, so called from a celebrated Bushranger, that Mrs. Gough, her child, and Ann Geary were killed. The Quoin and the lofty Table Mountain there were favourite haunts of the Natives, from which they made their descents upon stray colonists. A poor Jew lad had been betrayed into some *liaison* with a gin there, and was subsequently killed by the men. When his corpse was recovered, it was found horribly mutilated by the jealous people of the tribe; a portion of the body being found thrust into the mouth of the corpse.

It was at no great distance off that Mr. A. Jones became the subject of an attack, which is thus described by himself at the inquest before Mr. Anstey, P.M. of Oatlands :—

“In November, 1826, I was attacked by a numerous tribe of Aborigines at my residence at Pleasant Place, in the parish of Rutland, in the county of Monmouth. On Thursday evening I left my wife and family at home, proceeding myself in search of some sheep, and returned about ten o'clock of the forenoon. I had scarcely entered my dwelling when my little boy came in crying that the Blacks were about; I seized my musket and went out, and saw two. I pursued them; when I got half-way to the tier, I saw about twenty Natives in ambush amongst some wattle trees. My wife was at the time standing at my door, with a loaded pistol in her hand, and called to me to come down, which I did. The Natives followed, swearing at me in good English. They now extended themselves, and as the trees were at that time standing close to the house, they singly skulked behind them. I was on the alert, for I observed one man on one side, and another one on the other side, with lighted bark in their hands; the women and children were up in the tier. I was much perplexed, for I was obliged constantly to run forwards and backwards. The centre of them worked down when they saw an opportunity.

“It had been a high flood the day before, and the water had scarcely left the marshes, so we were hemmed in on all sides, the river behind and the Blacks before us. Mrs. Jones had several times prevented the men from coming to the house by presenting her pistol at them, which so exasperated



them that he who was taller than the rest, and seemed to be their chief, exclaimed in a great passion, in English, 'As for you, ma-am—as for you, ma-am, I will put you in the river, ma-am;' and then he cut a number of capers. We had then with us a courageous and faithful little girl, who proposed to go upon a scrubby hill, about a mile distant, to tell the sawyers who were at work there the dangers to which we were exposed; but we could not allow it, fearing she would be speared; it appeared afterwards that she had crawled along the fences, and succeeded in getting up to the sawyers. Guessing that she had proceeded thither, in about half-an-hour after we coo-ee'd, and were speedily answered by the men. The native women on the tier gave out a signal, and the Blacks all fled. We pursued them, and I got very close to one, when he stooped under the boughs of a fallen tree, and I could see no more of him. We came up to a spot where we found a fire, with some kangaroo half roasted. We then observed the Blacks ascending the second tier, and we quitted further pursuit, as it would not have been safe to leave the house and family unprotected. This engagement with the Natives lasted about four hours."

It must, however, be borne in mind, that a Guerilla warfare, which was dignified in Spain against the French, heroic against the Persians in Greece, and patriotic in the Tyrolese against Napoleon, was regarded in Van Diemen's Land as the blind fury of a nest of savages. Not so thought an old convict servant-man of mine, who, speaking of the bold deeds of the Ouse, or Big River tribe, said, "They fought well. I admire their pluck. They knew they were the weaker, but they felt they were the injured, and they sought revenge against many odds. They were brave fellows. I'd have done the same." One tribe, that was once known to possess three hundred fighting men, was reduced in ten years to twenty-two.

A Dutch historian of New Amsterdam, afterwards the New York of the United States, explains a colonial native difficulty:—"In 1642, some Dutch traders, having sagaciously contrived to get an Indian drunk, robbed him of his valuable dress of beaver skins. In vengeance for this injury, the warriors killed two white men." A barbarous war was the result. But some hundreds fled to a tribe near the settle-



ment of New Amsterdam. The governor, Kieft, would not rest. "A band of soldiers and colonists was despatched on the horrid errand: the unsuspecting savages were surprised in their sleep, and more than one hundred of them were massacred in cold blood. The Indians living on the Hudson rose to revenge this cruel treachery, and were joined by the tribes of Long Island. A confederacy of eleven clans, numbering more than fifteen hundred warriors, was formed, and a furious war blazed wherever a Dutch settlement was to be found."

A little substitution of names would make this the record of the "Black War" of Van Diemen's Land.

The year 1831 presented appalling scenes before the colonists. Outrages were still in the ascendant. The exasperated Aborigines saw no hope before them, and seemed resolved to die as warriors that, in defending their land, were resolved to do the enemy as much mischief as possible. They seemed ubiquitous, from the rapidity of their march. The sky was illuminated by fires in various quarters. Spears were thrown here and there with such terrible energy, as apparently to multiply the forces of the Natives, and keep the country settlers in constant and harassing watchfulness. About one hundred and fifty men alone were sufficient to excite such alarm in the breasts of the members of a flourishing British colony.

The time of terror was well described to me by a colonist, who bore a trying part in the events of that period:—"Thus they continued menacing the settlers," wrote he, "and murdering those that were found alone and unprotected; so that it was unsafe for a person to travel alone and without a gun, and the mind had to be made up beforehand as to which was the nearest house to run to, in case he was beset by the Blacks. He must not fire his gun, but keep them at bay by pointing it at them, for they had learnt that what they thought would go 'Pop, pop, pop,' would only pop once; and this being over, they would rush upon the unfortunate, and soon despatch him with their spears and waddies."

Mosquito, the desperate leader in many an outrage by the Aborigines, appears so prominently in the Black War, as to demand a particular notice.

He was not a Tasmanian, but a New Hollander, or



Australian native. Although endowed with superior physical powers, as well as a vigorous intellect and indomitable will, he was indebted to his acquirements in civilization for his extra ability in working mischief. Belonging to the Broken Bay tribe, located to the north of Sydney, he soon associated with a low class of convict population in his neighbourhood, and became an English scholar in our national vices of drinking and swearing, as well as in the employment of our tongue.

The crime that brought him under the penal care of Government, was one with which he was associated with another wretched man, known by the settlers as *Bulldog*. These two Australian Blacks waylaid a woman, ill-used, and then murdered her. To gratify their horrible propensities, they ripped open the body for the destruction of the child. Strange to say, for want of some European evidence, the authorities simply sent them to the penal settlement of Norfolk Island. After the death of his *bulldog* accomplice, Mosquito was forwarded to the convict island of Van Diemen's Land in 1813.

There he was, according to the mode of the day, assigned as servant to Mr. Kimberley of Antill Ponds. It was not far from that place that I heard some account of the man. For some years he conducted himself tolerably well, or so carefully guarded his acts as to keep out of the hands of the constable. An old man, named Elliot, who came to the colony in 1815, told me that he knew Mosquito when at service with Mr. Lord, and that he there contracted an improper connection with *Black Hannah*, but whom he subsequently murdered in a fit of passion.

Mr. Melville mentions that he was employed to track bushrangers. For such a task he was peculiarly suited. Of a very tall, slim figure, of a wiry, active frame, with remarkable acuteness of sense, even for a native, and animated by a profound love of excitement and mischief, he made an admirable blood-hound. Distinguished success attended his tracking. But, as the constables with whom he was associated were men of the prisoner class, some of them ex-Bushrangers, and all with a powerful sympathy for the unfortunate robber, excepting in cases where his capture would bring dollars to their pockets, the zeal of Mosquito soon excited their ill-will, and plots were laid to get him into *trouble*.



Being sent down to Hobart Town in 1818, he formally connected himself with some half-civilized, *alias* drunken, Aborigines, who hung about the town, over whom, by his superior intellectual energy, he established his authority. The Rev. Mr. Horton, on his visit to the colony, fell in with this so-called *Tame Mob*, and wrote the following account for a London magazine of 1822:—

“It consisted of persons (twenty or thirty of both sexes) who had absconded from their proper tribes in the interior, and is governed by a native of Port Jackson, named Muskitoo. This man was transported from Sydney to Van Diemen's Land, some years ago, for the murder of a woman, and was for some time after his arrival employed as a stock-keeper. How he was raised to this present station, as a leader of this tribe, I know not, unless it was in consideration of his superior skill and muscular strength. This party, like the rest of their race, never work, nor have any settled place of abode, but wander about from one part to another, subsisting on what is given them by the benevolent, and on kangaroos, opossums, oysters, &c. which they procure for themselves.”

This man had drawn them around him as their acknowledged chief, in a sense superior to any known among the equality-loving Tasmanians, and governed them after the approved European model. Many of them had transgressed tribal laws in their own districts, and were obliged to live abroad for a season. The superior attractions of town life may have seduced some from the forests. Others came from a distance to place themselves under the command of the wily New Hollander. It was easy for him to play the part of a ruler, in gathering the choicest women for his wives. It was his conduct to these that illustrated the cruelty of his natural disposition. He had several whom he used for private purposes of aggrandizement with the tribe, or for the procuring of extra luxuries from the Europeans. But one wife, the really fine-looking “Gooseberry,” from the Oyster Bay tribe, was reserved for his exclusive service. This woman eventually excited the jealous anger of her savage lord, who murdered her in the Government Domain, outside of Hobart Town.

An ex-Bushranger is my authority for some stories about the man. He was well known, as a fellow-forester, to this dreaded chief at the period when they in common, though



on separate commissions, preyed upon the country settlers. Coming once upon his track at an inconvenient time, when he was *wanted* by the Governor, the familiar Bushranger was ordered off, as Mosquito was impressed with the notion that he might seek his own pardon by the betrayal of his black acquaintance. He cried out to him, "What do you do here? Go away." The hint was sufficient, and he hastened off. But he said that he knew for a fact that once the terrible monster cut off the breast of one of his gins, because she would persist, against his orders, in suckling her child.

He hung about the neighbourhood of Hobart Town for some time, soliciting bread for his people. That food he would exchange for tobacco and rum, to gratify his own civilized tastes. Receivers and exchangers were readily found at the huts of the convict servants. His manner of life is spoken of by a witness, one Thomas M'Minn, in some evidence on a murder case, given before Mr. Anstey, Police Magistrate at Oatlands.

"I arrived in the colony," said he, "in 1820, and was placed in the service of Captain Blythe, near Oatlands, with whom I remained until his death in 1823. The Blacks were very quiet when I arrived here. Mosquito and his Mob came to Mr. Blythe's hut very often. Mosquito had three wives or gins. He would not allow any man to have intercourse with them. The other gins were allowed to prostitute themselves to white men for bread and other things. Mosquito ordered a gin to retire with a white man, and she obeyed his orders. This happened, as I am told, very often."

According to the account told me by old Ward, Mosquito "kept the tethers," and sent the Blacks to rob and slaughter. He would lurk about, gain information, lay his plans in a skilful manner, and then, from his retreat, despatch his band to carry on the warfare. It was among the Oyster Bay Mob, of the east coast, that this worthy practised his demoniacal arts, and that, for a long period, with singular address and success. His people kept the land in a state of terror. Old Talbot gave me particulars of the horrible death of a woman and her daughter, at the Ouse River, and declared that the "Darkies were as quiet as dogs before Mosquito came." In the language of Mr. Meredith, a settler of that district:—"They spared neither age nor sex; the



aged woman and the helpless child alike fell victims to their ferocity." He adds, also :—"Owing to their extreme cunning, activity, and cat-like nature, retaliation was all but impossible." It does not appear, however, that Mosquito was a favourite with all the tribe; for we read of a number of them setting on him one day, and beating him nearly to death with their waddies. Doubtless, this arose from a little political feeling, some of the old chiefs not approving of the assumption of the premiership by a stranger, though a good White-hater. It may have been some Brutus and Cassius conspirators, loving their Cæsar much, but their freedom more, who thought to get rid of their self-constituted Dictator.

Tom Birch joined Mosquito in 1822. This young Tasmanian Native had been brought up by Mr. Birch of Hobart Town from boyhood. From his aged and very estimable mistress, I gathered information about him. She repeatedly spoke to me of "Poor Tom," expressing a deep interest in him. He was so good and useful a lad, so obliging and gentle, so honest and careful, and so thoroughly devoted to his master. He spoke English correctly, and could read and write. In his attendance at church, and general deportment, he gave promise of true civilization. But in an evil hour Mosquito made his acquaintance. He poisoned his mind against Europeans, representing them as the enemies of his race. He pictured the hopelessness and aimlessness of his future. What could he ever be but the slave of the Whites? Could he get a wife among them? Would they admit him on an equality with themselves? Did they not look upon him as a black dog? and would they not treat him very soon accordingly? Then temptations were placed before him. He was incited to drink. He was admitted into the licentious orgies of the roaming tribe. The master and mistress saw the change coming over him, and strove to counteract the evil, but in vain. His regard for them was too strong and real to permit him to wrong them, or suffer their property to be injured by his vicious friends. But he could not stay in town. He bolted to the Bush, and was then recognized as a bold robber of the forest, and an active accomplice of Mosquito's.

Although the rascally chief long kept his own neck out



of the halter by his duplicity and unscrupulous sacrifice of his confederates, poor Tom Birch was soon captured. His old employer was able to preserve his life from the law's demands, but he was sentenced to the dreadful convict settlement at Macquarie Harbour. He escaped thence through his fertility of expedients, and associated himself with the Abyssinian Mob, beyond the Ouse river, then engaged in the Black War. It was while Tom was out the second time, that he was connected with several robberies and murders near the Shannon.

His Hobart Town friends heard of his whereabouts, and determined, if possible, to save him. They represented to the Governor the desirability of obtaining the help of so intelligent a Native in his plan of Conciliation, and overtures were made to the outlaw. He accepted the proposed terms, and was attached to one or other of the roving parties, proving himself a valuable friend to both contending races. A life of Bush exposure proved fatal to him at last, and he died at Emu Bay, in 1832, from dysentery.

Black Jack, Mosquito's other prominent mate, and who subsequently came to trial with him, was very different to Tom. Able to read and write, this civilized Aborigine was a fit companion for Mosquito. When taking to the Bush, he exclaimed, "I'll kill all the White ——." He has been heard to say, when torturing some unhappy creature, "Jack will touch him there again, he don't like it." Old Talbot gave him a very bad character, pronouncing him as cruel as the leader of the Mob. On one occasion the whole gang might have been captured, but from the impulsive conduct of the constables, who had primed themselves too much with grog, and, in their Dutch courage, made so much noise in their charge, as to give their dark foes sufficient warning to escape to the scrub.

The course of this hero of blood was stayed in consequence of a murder committed near the east coast. Mr. Meredith, who was living near the scene of the conflict at the time, is our historian of the event. It appears that Mosquito came with some of the Oyster Bay tribe to Grindstone Bay, upon a run belonging to Mr. Silas Gatehouse, on pretence of hunting. Radford, a stock-keeper, held a sort of parley with the ruffian, and, as he saw him seizing some fine



kangaroo dogs, called out, "Don't take our dogs away." The reply to this was a spear wound in his side from Black Jack. A rush to the hut took place. Radford ran wounded, with naked feet, for three miles, chased by the Blacks, but he escaped. Two men in the hut were speared to death, Mormer or Mammaoa, a Tahitian native, and one William Holyoake. This took place on November 15th, 1823.

Falling in with an "Old Hand" at Warrnambool, nearly thirty years ago, I got another version of the story from one who claimed to have been with Radford on that eventful occasion. The old man was one of the notables of Port Phillip history, being one of Mr. John Batman's men on his first visit to that colony in 1835. For several years before, he had lived with the Batman family in Tasmania, at their Ben Lomond Home, and had accompanied John Batman in his chase of Bushrangers and Black fellows. When I knew him he was seventy years old. Of middle height, but of massive proportions, he would have been more than a match for many a younger man in a close conflict. His chest and neck betokened great physical strength. His white locks curled briskly from under his broad-brimmed hat, and his hair hung down in a handsome and magnificent beard, to be envied by a Pasha. His mien was bold and cheerful. His eye was quick and ingenuous. His ruddy cheeks stood out with good humour and the most robust health. Old Daddy, as he was called, bore a good name; and, making every allowance for improvements upon a tale so often told, and referring to a date so many years before, I had reason to believe that his yarn contained more than the elements of truth, and that it was not a mere story founded upon facts. There may have been reasons why some things he spoke about were not told before.

Substantially, his story is the same as that of others about Radford, Holyoake, &c. Radford and he happened to leave the hut one morning without their guns, contrary to their custom, as the weather was wet. When fleeing from the Blacks, he received two spear wounds, one in his thigh. Informing his master of the outrage, that gentleman is said to have sworn not to rest two nights in his bed until he had taken a bloody revenge. Collecting a party of thirty—constables, soldiers, and neighbours—he set off to execute



his threat. One Douglas Evans, a Sydney Native, was met upon the road, and from him information was received that a large body of the Aborigines had camped for the night in a gully by Sally Peak, six miles from Bushy Plains, on the border of Prosser's Plains.

They proceeded stealthily as they neared the spot; and, agreeing upon a signal, moved quietly in couples, until they had surrounded the sleepers. The whistle of the leader was sounded, and volley after volley of ball cartridge was poured in upon the dark groups around the little camp-fires. The number slain was considerable. Few passed the fatal line. Many children were among the wounded ones. A sergeant seized hold of a little boy, who attempted to rush by him in the darkness; and exclaiming, "You ——, if you ain't mischievous now, you will be," swung him round by his feet against a tree, and dashed his brains out. Women were lying about still grasping their children amidst their dying torments. Such was the story given me by the old man.

The extraordinary sagacity of Mosquito enabled him to elude several snares for his capture; but he was at length secured through the courage of a half-civilized Native, named Tegg.

This young lad, though brought up with Europeans, was known to have communications with the murderer. Applications were made to enlist his help in securing the arch chieftain. He agreed to attempt the capture if provided with the company of constables at hand, and was promised a boat should he succeed. His ambition had been to possess a boat of his own, and trade between Bruni Island and Hobart Town. Day by day he sought the retreat of Mosquito, who had now separated from his gang, because of the hot pursuit, and was concealed with two of his *gins* near Oyster Bay. Godfrey and Marshall, two constables, were with Tegg when the human tiger's lair was discovered. Sending the Europeans to secure the women, this lad of seventeen ran toward Mosquito, and shot him in the thigh. Singularly enough, the wretched man had no spears near him at the time, and had to run for his life, pursued by the Black, who fired another barrel at him. Brought to bay by loss of blood, he leaned against a tree, and in impotent rage threw sticks at the advancing youth. He was brought down



to Hobart Town, and for a while his life was in jeopardy from his wounds.

Mosquito and Black Jack, in December 1824, were tried for the murder of William Holyoake, at Grindstone Bay, committed on the 15th of November, 1823. Mosquito was found guilty on this charge, but Black Jack not guilty.

Although Black Jack escaped on that occasion, he was subsequently convicted of the murder of Patrick Macarthy, hut-keeper, Sorell Plains. He and his chief, Mosquito, were to die together. He implored the judge to send him to the penal hell of Macquarie Harbour, instead of hanging him; discreetly saying to a friend, "Then I'll soon run away." His Honour seemed to take that view of the question, and declined to grant the favour. One of my tell-tale acquaintances remarked, "I had the pleasure of seeing them both tucked up comfortably." They were in other company, for five Bushrangers were to be suspended with them. The scene of their execution was at what was called Mr. Muster-Master Mason's place. This was at the "Cascades," the site afterwards of the Female Factory, at the farther end of Macquarie Street, Hobart Town, where the basaltic columns of Mount Wellington appear to overhang the spectator. It was on the 25th of February, 1825. The Chaplain, the Rev. W. Bedford, made a forcible address to the multitude of curious spectators there. He thus appealed to them:—"These poor unhappy fellow-worms, whose lives have become forfeited to the laws of violated justice and humanity, implore you to shun the path that leads to death." All the officers in attendance upon the solemn occasion were attired in deep mourning. Several of the condemned men joined in singing a funeral hymn. To all the clergyman's exhortations, Mosquito preserved a sullen silence, but Black Jack was much alarmed. The "Old Hands" are fond of telling the story that, upon the clergyman exhorting Jack to pray, he exclaimed, "You pray yourself; I too frightened to pray." Upon this, to use the language of the newspaper of the day, "the hapless offenders, after a short interval, were launched into eternity."

But, without doubt, the execution of Mosquito, who exerted so fascinating an influence upon the simple tribes, was attended with important results. Many Natives came into town to implore the pardon of the man; and, upon the



failure of their efforts, returned to the Bush with bitterer feelings against the dominant race. As Mr. Gilbert Robertson wrote in 1831 :—"Although Mosquito has been removed, yet the lessons he afforded the Aborigines of this island have not been forgotten; experience has taught them craft, cunning, activity, and watchfulness, and at this moment they have found means to spread terror amongst the Colonists residing in the interior." The "Black War" is, indeed, dated by some persons from the death of Mosquito.

The captor, Tegg, or Teague, as it has been written, did not get the price of blood; and he therefore, in sullen anger, betook himself to the Bush, saying, "They promised me a boat, but they no give it; me go with Wild Mob, and kill all white men come near me." Many murders were attributed to him. He was concerned in the murder of two stockmen belonging to Messrs. Cox and Barclay. It is also recorded, that a native woman, brought up from infancy by the Whites, was, when far advanced in pregnancy, speared to death by this revengeful fellow. Strange to say, he subsequently returned to Hobart Town, and received his boat, which was, said the newspaper, "to conciliate the youth's unfortunately aggravated feelings." (!)

### THE LINE.

THE *Line*, the most formidable part of the Black War, was formed towards the close of 1830. It was not like the celebrated *Thin Red Line* of the Crimea, seen and seeing all the way, but a *cordon* of more unequal character, to drive the Aborigines into a corner of Tasmania.

History is not without parallels of a *Line* operation. A *levy en masse* for a similar purpose took place in Governor Macquarie's time. The Natives of New South Wales had been very troublesome; and, in 1816, General Macquarie summoned the colonists, with all available military and constabulary, and drove the Blacks before him beyond the Blue Mountains, with great slaughter. This may have suggested to the authorities of Van Diemen's Land the scheme eventually adopted there.

A remarkably hopeful Government paper had appeared in



August 1830, which urged the colonists not to hurt the well-disposed Natives, but rather give them a dinner, with smiles, and let them depart, with a blessing. A reconsideration of the subject, after loud complaints of his people, induced Colonel Arthur to qualify his statement, and quiet the surges of public opinion. This produced Government Order 166, Aug. 27th, 1830. In that it was said, that while no measure of conciliation was to be spared, it was not intended that the people should "relax the most strenuous exertions to repel and to drive from the settled country those Natives who seize every occasion to perpetrate murders, and to plunder and destroy the property of the inhabitants."

But the trumpet-tongued appeals of the colony called for more decided action, and Colonel Arthur came forth to do all that a Governor could do for the relief of his subjects.

After much discussion, it was determined to depend no longer upon the feeble operations of the Roving Parties,—the *Five Pounds' Catchers*, as they were called,—but to make a more decided impression upon the enemy in extensive and simultaneous action, by which they might achieve wholesale captures; for, of course, no allusion could be made to the possible destruction of many. The plan proposed was, to station the military in certain centres of the settled districts, and to call upon the people to volunteer their help in connecting themselves with any commander of these military parties they preferred. A charge was to be simultaneously made from these various foci of strength on the 7th of October, "one great and engrossing pursuit." No special rewards were offered, but sufficient inducements were hinted at by a Government known to possess the means of bestowing prizes. Though not intended as a *Line* proceeding, this act was the forerunner of that military movement.

The Government Order calling for volunteers was issued from the Colonial Secretary's Office, September 9th, 1830. This, like other orders of the period, may be read in the author's 'Last of the Tasmanians.' The several stations to be occupied by the volunteers are there given.

The Colonists were pleased with the decision of the Government. The *Hobart Town Courier*, of September 11, already saw, "by *anticipation*, crowds of these poor, benighted creatures marched into town." The editor sagely



recommends the volunteers and military to seize upon the women and children, and then the men would surrender themselves. Perhaps he half fancied that the native males would place the tender ones in front, as the Persians did with the cats against the Egyptians. It was, however, admitted that at least thirty, that had been previously caught and well initiated in our English customs, were then with their Bush countrymen, and taking the lead by reason of their superior enlightenment.

Before the invitations of Colonel Arthur could be issued, however, a change in the arrangements occurred. It was contended that it would be comparatively useless to have the war made at so many points, affording opportunities for the Natives, by their superior Bush craft, to pass between the forces hither and thither, and so keep the colony in constant terror. Still, the inhabitants were anxious to co-operate with their rulers in any project offering relief.

A public meeting took place on September 22nd, in the Court of Requests' Room, ostensibly to make arrangements for the formation of a town-guard. The chairman of that court, Jos. Hone, Esq., brother of the celebrated English writer of that name, was requested to preside. The old gentleman has more than once told me, at his Hobart Town home, his tale of the past. Anthony Fenn Kemp, Esq., one of the earliest officers in the colony, gave the audience some particulars of the first attack, at Risdon, in 1804. Mr. Gellibrand, attorney, admonished the colonists not to shoot any Aborigines when they should be flying before them. Mr. Hackett doubted the ability of the dark race to know the wishes of Government, as not five white persons could speak their language.

The first resolution passed declared it the duty of every man cheerfully to contribute to the common cause every assistance in his power. The second suggested the means; that of personal service in the field, or performing the duties of the military during the absence of the latter from town. The third pledged the meeting to five weeks' service in the capital, dated from the 2nd of October. The fourth urged the propriety of the inhabitants selecting their own particular scene of duty, and the election of their officers. The last resolution was concerning the nomination of fifteen persons



to form a committee, six of whom were to wait upon the Governor. Two dozen gentlemen, however, volunteered to take the battery guard, if independent of this general committee.

There was not unanimity of opinion. Mr. Gregson, a barrister of no mean talent and oratorical power, had been opposed to Government on political grounds, and took legal exception to their mode of procedure, contending that such a warlike demonstration was uncalled for, and that the Natives, as real masters of the soil, ought not to be forced from the territory bequeathed to them by their fathers, and now usurped by the British crown. He would not, therefore, go himself, nor would he permit one of his servants "to follow to the field some warlike Lord." His opponents professed to be surprised that a gentleman owning such dignified, moral, and correct sentiments, should continue to hold a fine estate, as he did, upon a title granted by public robbers of a nation, and urged him to leave a land desecrated by such violation of the rights of man and the honour of civilization.

The Governor felt himself strengthened by the moral support of his subjects, and modified and expanded his original views. Instead of a number of separate and unsupported, though simultaneous, operations over the whole of the settled districts, comprehending three-fourths of the island, it was resolved to make one grand, united effort to capture the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes, by drawing a line from Waterloo Point on the east to Lake Echo on the west, and driving the Blacks into Tasman's Peninsula, at the south-east corner of the island.

The Survey Department was severely taxed on this occasion, as everything depended upon a knowledge of the country. But therein lay the weakness of the scheme. It was long before the days of trigonometrical survey in the colony. Men took up land before survey, and the adjustment of acreage between neighbours was an established source of contention. Even prominent points of physical features were incorrectly laid down. As it was impossible to do better at the time, the leaders of parties were each provided with a copy of the little map published by Dr. Ross, editor of the *Courier*, by which they were expected to guide their march.



To appreciate the obstacles meeting the adventurous trackers, the nature of the country should be understood.

To illustrate the difficulties of Bush exploration in Tasmania, the relation of an experience of the writer may be pardoned. It was in 1842 that much excitement prevailed in Hobart Town, about a Fall 200 feet in depth, which was almost in sight of the settlement. Accompanied by my friend Mr. George Washington Walker, the ex-Quaker Missionary, so called, with others, under the guidance of Mr. Dickenson, the florist, I went to visit this wonderful sight. The only way then known, and that which we had to follow, was first to ascend Mount Wellington, climbing over dislocated masses of greenstone rocks, crossing fallen trees of huge magnitude, and piercing a thicket that was an enemy to broad-cloth. Passing over the mountain, we came to a narrow river, issuing from the Saddle, and finding its exit in North-west Bay. There was little water, fortunately, as our only path was in its bed, leaping from rock to rock, and occasionally dropping into the icy stream. Again and again we tried the margin, but were repulsed at every trial. So dense was the scrub, that the guide assured us that with a tomahawk, in a similar place, he could make but a quarter of a mile's progress in eight hours.

It was while resting at the summit of the Falls, surrounded by the wild triumphs of Nature, that I heard the story of a lost one. A London school-fellow of mine had gone to sea. In one voyage he came to Hobart Town. Attracted by the beauty of Mount Wellington, and believing it easy of access, he and a mate started away from the vessel, carrying a few biscuits with them. Five days had passed without their return, though soldiers were sent from town with bugles, and constables with fire-arms, to attract the ears of the lost sailors. At length a man ploughing near Brown's River, quite on the other side of the range, observed a human form slowly creeping through the forest. It was the unfortunate young man, in almost senseless exhaustion. Two days passed before he was capable of telling his story. They had gained the top, but missed their way downward. The biscuits were soon consumed, and the hunger of the Bush assailed them. After losing their clothing, and experiencing severe wounds, from the sharp rocks and thorny forest, they came to the head of



a great waterfall—the spot where our party were camping. There one of them, whose mind had been wandering for some time, suddenly shrieked out “Mother!” darted on one side, and was never seen again. His skeleton has not been discovered. How the survivor got down he knew not; but the effect upon the poor fellow was sad enough for years after.

This was partly the sort of country to be threaded by three thousand people, with inadequate appliances, in an enterprise requiring the utmost circumspection, and against a people as sagacious as Indians in forest lore, and whose dark bodies would be indistinctly observed in the obscurity of a Bush so impervious to sunlight.

The Government Order described the routes as well as they could then be indicated. The object was to drive the Natives from other parts into the county of Buckingham, then forming the southern, settled, side of the island, and through that to the neck of Forrestier’s Peninsula.

This isthmus of land, called East Bay Neck, is rather flat, and only a few hundred yards in width. It unites to the Main the Peninsula of Forrestier, so called by Commodore Baudin after the French Minister of Marine. That again is connected with Tasman’s Peninsula by Eagle Hawk Neck, a smaller isthmus than the other. At the time that Tasman’s Peninsula was occupied by convict penal stations, to prevent runaways getting into Forrestier’s Peninsula, and so on to the Main, fierce dogs were chained across Eagle Hawk Neck, in addition to the guard of soldiers. Though flat, the immediate neighbourhood of East Bay Neck is high land, and scrubby, miserable country. The rocks are chiefly Silurian and carboniferous strata, broken by granite hills, pierced by greenstone veins, or altered by basaltic contact to a geometrical parallelism, like the tessellated pavement of Eagle Hawk Neck. A bay divides the Forrestier’s Peninsula from the granite land of the east coast, terminating in Schouten’s Island, two-thirds of which consists of granite and one-third of greenstone. Its neighbouring Peninsula, Tasman’s, exhibits the volcanic element in great force, causing disruptions among the anthracitic coal-beds.

The Government Order expressed a desire for the magistrates to get the force organized in parties of ten, with a



leader and guide. The military commanders were to be accompanied by some of the Roving Parties that had been out after the Blacks, and who were, therefore, judged valuable auxiliaries to the movement. The *Ticket-of-Leave* men, as occupying the first social step towards freedom, were to be treated with more distinction than the ordinary convicts, who would be in the field as assigned servants of patriotic settlers; magistrates were to give each prisoner a written pass with his division described, and exercise discretion about intrusting some with fire-arms. Fires were to be kept burning on certain hills, as marks to steer by.

Mr. Surveyor-General Frankland has the credit of forming the general outline of the scheme, though ably assisted by Major Shaw.

The change of policy astonished many, while approved of by most. The idea of the *Line* was a source of merriment with those who were the political enemies of Government. One of the heroes of the times, whom I knew in Melbourne afterwards, explained the scheme thus: "Look here—it was just like this. Suppose I said I would catch all the fish coming down the Yarra, and put a little net in the middle, leaving all the rest of the stream open, I guess I wouldn't catch many." Mr. Gregson ridiculed the whole affair, as like climbing up Mount Wellington, 4000 feet high, for an easy way to get whales, by harpooning from its summit. The *Launceston Advertiser* was delighted to have an opportunity of attacking the authorities by a hit at the editor of the semi-official paper, the *Hobart Town Courier*, that had just then, by arrangement, announced the plan that should be adopted, and which was gazetted a day or two only after.

"While we give," says the *Advertiser* of September 27th, "to the kind-hearted, and worthy, but invisible editor of the *Courier* every credit for his advice of a *Cordon* to catch the Blacks, and then to place them on Tasman's Peninsula, we must just say that it is one of those visionary schemes to be wished for, but not practicable. It no doubt reads very prettily thus: 'Let a cordon be drawn across the island early in the morning, and before night drive all the Blacks in that division up in one corner; and mind, men, do not shoot or hurt one, but catch them *all alive*, oh! and be very careful you don't hurt them, and if they should attempt to run away from you,



tell them to stop, or you will certainly shoot, and the bare words will arrest them, only you must first learn them the language in which it is spoken.' It is little better than idiocy to talk of surrounding and catching a group of active, *naked*—mind, *naked*—men and women, divested of all burdens of all sorts," &c.

The Sydney *Australian* of October had the following article upon that month's intended movements in the southern isle: "We call the present warfare against a handful of poor, naked, despicable savages, a HUMBUG in every sense of the word. Every man in the island is in motion, from the Governor downwards to the meanest convict. The mercer dons his helmet, and deserts his counter, to measure the dimensions of the butcher's beef, or the longitude of his own tapes, with his broadsword. The farmer's scythe and reaping-hook are transmuted to the coat of mail and bayonet! The blacksmith, from forging shoes for the settler's nag, now forges the chains to enslave, and whets the instruments of death!! These are against savages whose territory in point of fact this very armed host has usurped!! Savages who have been straitened in their means of subsistence by that very usurpation!!! Savages who knew not the language, nor the meditations of their foes, save from the indiscriminate slaughter of their own people."

The important public announcement of proceedings connected with the *Line* operations was issued September 25th, 1830. The preamble ran thus:—

"The community being called upon to act *en masse* on the 7th October next, for the purpose of capturing those hostile tribes of the Natives, which are daily committing renewed atrocities upon the settlers," &c.

The Oyster Bay and Big River tribes must at least be captured. Major Douglas was to have his chain of posts from the east coast by St. Patrick's Head, across to Campbell Town, and thence to the Lake River, aided by Major Gray, Mr. Batman, &c. Each party of ten was to have a leader. Parts of the 63rd, 57th, and 17th Regiments, besides a host of constables, were to be reinforced by the whole body of men settlers. Particular directions were given to the several parties as to their duties, and the localities they should occupy on specified days.



The very active magistrate of Oatlands, Mr. Anstey, had a powerful force of volunteers and their assigned servants. Captain Donaldson was to hasten from Norfolk Plains toward Lake Arthur and Great Lake, nearly 4000 feet above the sea level, to arrest any escape of Blacks to the westward mountains. Captain Wentworth should take the Shannon, Ouse, and Clyde country, west central.

All were to march onward in successive stages. The daily ration to each person, in a weekly allotment, was 3 oz. of sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of tea, 2 lbs. of flour,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of meat. The object avowed in the Proclamation was "to capture and raise them (*the Natives*) in the scale of civilization, by placing them under the immediate control of a competent establishment, from whence they will not have it in their power to escape and molest the white inhabitants of the colony."

Among the Leaders of Parties co-operating with the military and magistracy were Messrs. Walpole, G. Robertson, Wedge, Emmett, Brodribb, Sherwin, J. Batman, H. Batman, Tortosa, Pearce, Massey, Myers, Hobbs, Semott, Layman, G. Scott, Monisby, Allison, Franks, Flaxmore, G. Evans, Hunison, Cox, Allison, Armytage, Russell, Thomas, Jones, Patterson, Kimberley, Espie, Lackay, Stansfield, Cawthorne, Cassidy, Mills, Proctor, Stacey, Steele, Symott, Shone, McDonald, Gatehouse, Dodge, Currie, Kirby, Lloyd, Billett, Cottrell, Ritchie, Moriarty, Herring, Lawrence, Gray, Gibson, Brumby, Pyke, Griffiths, Darke, Campbell, Henderson, Saltmarsh, Christian, Bonney, Giblin, Collins, Smith, White, Ralston, Adams, A. McDonald, H. McDonald, Hayse, Laing, Spratt, Geiss, Ramsey, Cæsar, Clark, Barker, Heywood, Brown, Tully, Ring, C. Walker, Shulty, Donaghue, Hawthorn, Cunningham, Doran, Brodie, Allardyce, Ballantyne, Colbert, Milton, Howells, Green, Nicholas, Fisher, Mason. Captain Vicary and Captain Moriarty were supposed to be in charge of the roving parties. Mr. Franks was chief guide in the Oatlands District.

There were 119 leaders of parties, with a guide to each, making other 119. In addition to the array of soldiers, and hundreds of constabulary, there were 738 convict assigned servants attached to the *Line*. A considerable number of free labouring men ranged themselves in the parties. Ticket-



of-leave men assembled. Altogether, there were about 3000 men engaged in the *Line* operations. A noble gathering of Tasmanian born youths took an active part in the field, as skirmishers in front, and proved their excellent Bush qualities.

The commissariat arrangements were efficiently managed by the Deputy Assistant Commissary General Browne, and more successfully than by his namesake in the Crimea. Drays and pack-horses were engaged for the conveyance of provisions, and peremptory orders were issued that none were to leave the *Line* for rations. Boots were in great demand, though due notice was given for each man to bring a couple of pairs with him. The rocks played sad havoc with the leather. Thus we have Captain Mahon writing to Major Douglas on the route: "I have worn out two new pairs of strong boots since I left Oatlands, and in a few more days I shall, I fear, be as naked as the men." Trousers and jackets were also in heavy request. I copied a hastily-written note of the Governor's to the Colonial Secretary in town, begging for speedy transmission of 140 pairs of trousers, 90 pairs of boots, and 50 jackets, with this remark: "The men employed in the roving parties I find almost *destitute of clothing*, from their having been employed almost incessantly in scouring the scrub." There was an allowance of a quarter of a pound of tobacco a week; and, after some complaint, half an ounce of soap a day was issued.

Due provision was made for warlike materials. In addition to the weapons taken on the route, there was a depot established at Oatlands, as a central station, containing 1000 stand of arms, 30,000 rounds of cartridge, and 300 handcuffs; the last named being in excess of the whole number of Aborigines, for whose capture such formidable preparations were made.

It was a very anxious time for Colonel Arthur. He had but just succeeded, after years of trouble, in putting an end to the exploits of the Dick Turpin gentry, that used to ride across the country in bands, like the Moss-troopers of old. And now, in calling out so large a number of the able-bodied men of the colony, he could not but feel concerned about the security of life and property in a penal settlement. There were many suffering the penalty of double conviction, and



requiring close retention ; there were others only just subdued by the strength of Government, who would be too ready to recommence their predatory employment in the confusion of affairs. Another cause of anxiety lay in the arming of assigned servants, and permitting them to roam the Bush without adequate oversight and guard. Some had assured the authorities that such men would embrace this favourable opportunity to rise in rebellion, and establish, as had more than once been threatened, an island home for the prisoner class, emancipating themselves, ejecting the free, and establishing an independent government of their own. A more probable difficulty lay in the engagement of convicts, dead in the sight of the law, as guardians of the public peace ; for nearly all the constabulary belonged to that condition of society. One who was a bondman thus refers to the condition of such parties : “ The Government had placed them in a situation different from that which the law had directed ; they had acted as free men, and with free men ; and when once permitted to do so, could the law or any known power *compel them to return to their former servitude ?* ” But the *Tasmania Review* is delighted to acknowledge that “ Fifteen hundred men of that class are now with arms in their hands, anxiously desirous of showing that they are trustworthy upon all occasions.” The *Review* was the advocate of the Emancipatists and Ticket-of-leave men.

The town, at least, must be secured. The gaol must not be freed of its inmates, nor the treasury looted of its contents. A TOWN GUARD was inaugurated ; Major E. Abbott was nominated Commandant. It was a jolly time for the Hobart Town citizens. Government was the liberal source of supply, and an *open-house* was established. Ration rum was pronounced of good quality, and was in full demand. A worthy tailor assured me that it was the merriest time he ever spent. The officers established themselves at Mr. Hodgson’s celebrated Macquarie Hotel. The speech of one, after a mess dinner, has been bequeathed to posterity, and exhibits the chivalrous patriotism of the period. “ Gentlemen,” said Captain Kemp, “ you see before you a sample of what this colony can produce, which we are now one and all making an unanimous effort to insure the enjoyment of in peace and comfort ;—if, when not only the necessaries, but many of the



luxuries of life, are thus bountifully supplied us, we are not loyal, we shall never be loyal. Fill your glasses, gentlemen: the health of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and success to the volunteers! Hip—hip—hip—hurrah!”

An old soldier, hearing the officers talking largely of their office, could not forbear saying, “Gentlemen, you may call yourselves marshals, generals, or colonels, but the duties assigned to you are usually performed by a corporal’s guard.”

When all were getting ready, the Governor thought it proper that the blessing of Heaven should be implored upon the expedition. Prayers were ordered to be offered up for this object on the Sunday before the setting out. While those employing freedom of language in public ministrations were left to their own mode of carrying out this obligation, the Episcopalians of the colony were agitated upon the propriety of the form to be adopted. As their spiritual head—their Bishop—resided several thousands of miles off, at Calcutta, and the Archdeacon in another country, this additional call upon their devotions was committed to the care of the Chaplain, the Rev. W. Bedford. That good man, without doubt, prepared a very suitable form of supplication, but which, nevertheless, subjected him to public criticism.

While entreating the Divine favour on behalf of an enterprise which would, if successful, be attended with the bloodshedding of the Natives, an urgent request was offered for their speedy conversion to Christianity. This was held to be slightly inconsistent with the principles of the New Testament, though admitted to be agreeable to the practice of all Christian governments. It might not be unlike the conduct of the warlike Bishop of Norwich, who, after making Wat Tyler’s rebels kneel and confess their sins, very episcopally gave them absolution, and afterwards very baronially ordered their throats to be cut.

But pretended exception was taken as to the prayer itself. It was declared “of importance to know who were the clergy by whom the English Bench of Bishops were represented.” The ritualistic fervour of the writer led him further to say, “However unimportant may be the mere wording of such a prayer, yet it is of importance that the public should know by whom it was composed. There is nothing connected



with the Church, not even the Articles of its Faith, so jealously looked after as the Liturgy." Another political moralist, at the end of this unfortunate expedition, referred to the blasphemy of this Address to the Deity, and the hypocritical hope of engaging the services of Heaven in the cause of injustice and cruelty, adding, "the very arrogance, presumption, and impiety of this special prayer insured its defeat."

The several parties were at length got under weigh. It is inexpedient to follow in their individual routes, and detail the conspicuous events of their progress. That which gained the most applause was the Launceston corps, under the command of Captain Donaldson. Nearly 350 men were led forward in good fighting condition, for they were the only division fully supplied with guns and ammunition. They passed westward to Westbury, and then made their course southward toward Lake Echo, threading their way amidst the rocky intricacies of the basaltic interior, and sighting the Bluffs of Quamby, Dry, and Miller, keeping the Macquarie River to their left, and the snow-clad western ranges to the right.

From the Hon. J. H. Wedge, who was one of the leading performers in the movement, I learn that the captain's detachments kept admirably in order, and met at Kemp's hut, by Lake Sorell, the source of the Clyde, and one of a series of noble sheets of water on the elevated basaltic plateau in the centre of the island.

A Public Notice awarded praise to Captain Donaldson's party. And well did they earn the glory of such a notice. From a veteran shepherd, who had been guide to a part of the captain's forces, I gathered some information of the trials of the road. He conducted a party of eighteen from near Deloraine to the top of a bluff some 4000 feet high. Torn by the scrub, hungry and wet, their camp was most miserable. Without tents, they had to pass an inclement night on that bleak hill, around the fire, or stowed away in the hollow of trees. He told me that several wanted to go home, their sense of discomfort overcoming their love of adventure and their devotion to duty. The roaring of a grand cascade, 300 feet in height, would have given them more pleasure had they the advantage of fine weather, dry boots, better



rations, and less aching limbs ; as it was, few of the wearied men would turn aside to see the spectacle. Old Hughes told me he picked up a twelve-pound bag of flour there, which had probably been dropped by some marauding fugitive.

The other divisions had probably fewer miles to travel than the north-west one, but some had a more fearful country to pass. One had to go from Quamby's Bluff of the Western mountains, eastward to Campbell Town, then along the lovely valley of the Avoca, still more eastward by St. Paul's river, and southward and eastward to the sea at Swanport. Another pressed from Broad Marsh to Russell's Falls of the Derwent, thence upward to Hamilton, Bothwell, and the Crescent Lake of the basaltic plateau. Captain Wentworth reached Brighton by the 16th inst., and walked along the banks of the Jordan to Jericho. There he was met by Major Douglas, and both made their way to Little Swanport on the coast. On the 20th of October there was a connection from Richmond to Prosser's Bay ; and, four days after, from Sorell through Brusby Plains and White Marsh to the Bay.

Every care was taken by Colonel Arthur to keep his forces in order. Minute regulations were issued nearly every day. Copies of General Orders were sent to the different commanders, who had to put their signature to the official document as an evidence that they had perused the same. Indeed, so active was the pen of the Governor, that some merriment was occasioned from the frequency of the missives and their occasional contradictions.

The Colonel's presence was seen or felt everywhere ; none travelled more than he, none wrote more than he. He has been known to ride, in such a country too, for fifty miles in one day, to see his orders executed. An old hand described the sunshine of a visit, when the party were very dispirited from the vexatious difficulties of the route with the Governor smiling, and saying, "Cheer up, my lads." Such was his attention to duty that, though a devoted and an anxious husband, he refrained from running up to town at a season of conjugal solicitude ; and when the news of a birth came to him, he repelled the natural impulse to return, and stayed at his post. During one of his excursions along the *Line*, he got lost three days in Paradise ! This celebrated region of



impracticable travelling, lying between Sorell and the coast, received its appellation from a Bushman disgusted with its wretched country.

Rumours about the Blacks were circulated with celerity, as they were invented with facility. The extreme solicitude of the Governor for news, and the desire of commanders to humour his passion, originated some remarkable and not very reliable stories.

But where were the Natives? With thousands of men beating the Bush and scouring the Tiers, to what possible retreat could they fly! A tribe of forty, seen westward of Norfolk Plains, were chased by one of the *Line* parties till they crossed the Shannon, and were lost in the labyrinths of the scrub. The baffled Whites left a notice of the affair on a piece of bark, and nailed this to a tree. Among the spoils collected from the fugitives were a chemise and a little child's frock. Jorgen Jorgenson saw them under circumstances which he narrates in a letter:—"As I went this morning over the Brown Mountain, rising a steep hill from a very deep gully, my horse began to rear and snort. Everything was thrown off, saddle and all. My trousers were literally torn to pieces; and, just as I had got the horse quieted, there stood over me three Blacks." Some men might have been nervous; but our heroic Dane informs us that he had but to draw his cutlass, when the warriors of the wilds scampered away.

There were, of course, the usual rumours, with and without foundation, of the appearance of the Aborigines. Some sentries had heard one dark night the rush of many in the scrub, but could not discern their forms. Several rushes were heard, and the fire-sticks of the people were seen in the gloom. A man laid down his musket, while he stooped for some fire-wood, and received a spear in his leg. He seized a fire-stick, and threw it at the enemy. Another spear penetrated his shoulder, when, without thinking anything of his musket, he shouted lustily for help. The approach of other sentries scattered the half-dozen Blacks.

Mr. William Robertson, a well-known and wealthy settler, quite shocked the Governor in describing the *Line* as worse than an Act of Parliament; for, while a coach-and-six could be driven through the latter, a waggon-and-eight might quietly pass the former. A force of Europeans could easily



have got through the ill-regulated *Line*, much more the cunning foresters. Two or three instances were well known, after the completion of the movement, of Natives having burst by the sentries themselves. As the men could not possibly keep their lines, as many were too frightened to maintain the regulated distance from a neighbour, and as others loved companionship too well to smoke alone, the distance was not observed, even when practicable, and large gaps were left.

The Government Orders were precise about preserving a certain distance. On October 17th, the Colonel again urged attention to this regulation. He then requested them to camp in parties of three at night, with a fire between the separate gatherings, and said the sentries should walk from the fire to and fro, but so as not to meet each other. In some of the best-regulated parties, after proceeding through the Bush for half an hour, they would halt, for all to come up, and cry 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., to ascertain if any were adrift. So little faith had Mr. Brodribb in the security of the *Line*, that he offered, as he assured me, to convey a letter for Colonel Arthur through any part of the *Line* without meeting an individual; and, not a little to the Governor's vexation, he accomplished the feat. A settler chased one fellow by moonlight, but missed him all at once near some fallen, dead timber. Despairing of seeing him again, he carelessly turned to go away, when one of the supposed charred branches was slowly lowered before his astonished eyes, and a black carcass rapidly rolled off into the thicket.

The best story of the *Line* is in connection with Mr. Walpole, who has the merit of making the only capture, but at the cost of ruining the whole affair. Mr. Walpole himself furnished an account of his performance, in a communication dated October 29th, 1830 :—

“ I heard the Natives hunting, and, on going closer, saw their dogs. I watched them for four hours, and, on convincing myself that they were settled for the night, I returned for the rest of my party, and in the evening placed them within three hundred yards of the Natives, where we waited until dawn of day (26th), and crept to one of the Natives, without being perceived by the inmates, until I caught one by the leg. There were five men in the hut, and the other



four rushed out through the back, while some of the party were stooping to catch them. One, however, was caught while jumping into the creek, and two others shot. There were five other huts across the creek, in the centre of a very thick scrub."

Mr. Surveyor Wedge, in one of his letters to me, agrees with others that the precipitation of Mr. Walpole lost the *Line* an important capture. Instead of a man and a boy, the whole tribe might have been secured by giving proper notice to his superior officer. The subsequent fate of that tribe of forty individuals is thus mentioned by my valuable correspondent:—

"I am inclined to think that it warned them of their danger, and put them on the alert to escape from it; and this they accomplished, a day or two afterwards, at or near Cherry-tree Hill, unknown to any at the time, except to the party upon whose encampment they sneaked unobserved, rushed past in a body, and speared, it was said, one of our men slightly in the leg. Why their escape was kept secret I am at a loss to imagine, unless, as was suggested to me by my informant, the party in question thought that discredit would attach to them if the fact was officially made known. The Lieutenant-Governor, being in ignorance that the Natives had escaped, the force was kept in its position a fortnight or more longer. At length an advance was ordered to East Bay Neck."

There being evidence of the Natives being within the *Line*, every place on the route supposed to afford extra means of concealment was well searched. The Blacks had never been known to move at night, from superstitious fears; but, being pressed by danger, they did not then hesitate travelling in darkness. A night of storm and an intensely black sky was selected for a rush at the Prosser's River, a few miles from the coast, and therefore not far from the East Bay Neck. Several were seen to pass by Lieutenant Ovens' division, though a vigilant look-out was maintained. The country was described by one of the parties as being most difficult of access from rock and scrub, and as being heretofore unknown. Five roving parties of ten each were detached to search the locality believed to contain the Blacks, under leaders well understanding Bush duty. A rush was made upon that



portion of the *Line* occupied by the Richmond force, on the 27th of October, by six men, who were driven back again. One Englishman dashed onward after the fugitives, and would have brought one down, had he not, in the very act of cocking his piece, tripped against a dead tree, and got a severe fall. Of the six, two were observed with blankets round their shoulders, while another carried a bundle of spears. An opossum hunting-party might have been taken, had not an officious constable given an untimely *coo-ey* for support.

Great hopes were entertained of final success. The *Courier* gave forth a jubilant sound, and had "no doubt but several hostile tribes were now enclosed." The bugles were ordered to stop their noisy intimations, which might alarm the game from the preserves. The Governor directed the settlers towards the East Bay Neck to keep "free from everything that might create alarm, or interrupt the passage of the fugitive Natives." They were, furthermore, "to keep themselves within their homesteads, and to avoid collecting their cattle, lighting fires, hallooing, shouting, or otherwise making a noise in the Bush, in order that nothing may present itself to deter the Aborigines from entering the Peninsula." Unhappy settlers!

Still further to elevate the hopes of the sanguiné ruler, a letter was brought to him giving encouraging news from the prison dépôt of Swan Island. Mr. Robinson thence announced his success with some people outside the *Line*, and not *then* intended to be trapped by the colonial forces, though a north-east expedition was resolved upon, if the southern one proved successful. The letter began: "I beg to acquaint your Excellency that a successful intercourse has been effected among those sanguinary tribes of Natives who have for so great a period infested the settled districts, and known as the Oyster Bay, Little Swanport, Ben Lomond, Cape Portland, and Piper's River Aborigines." Mr. Robinson further ventures to assert that "the whole aboriginal population could be brought together by the same means that has hitherto been adopted."

Yet the several members of the *Line* were not so inspirited. At first the novelty of the occasion, the fun of an encampment, the freedom of life, supported them in their march. But when the rain set in, and continued almost without



intermission for some weeks, the chivalry of the expedition was not so apparent. A friend described to me the scene on the Blue Hills, near Bothwell, the first night of camp. The sky was so clear, the air was so bracing, the fellowship was so good, that laughter and song carried the hours away till midnight; but when, just before dawn, the mountain fog crept over the bivouac with its penetrating chill, and a steady, heavy, cold rain succeeded, all Nature's gloom was reflected in the faces of the campaigners. It did not surprise many to hear of such desertions from duty as a letter from the Macquarie River mentions, where the writer, who may have been one of the patriotic fair, indignantly exclaims: "I blush to the bone when I tell you that certain volunteers from this neighbourhood have crawled home from the *Line* within the last fortnight." Their ardour for the service had soon cooled, or they had lacked the spirit of the lame blacksmith of Sorell, who, being unable to carry his wooden legs along so rough a line, nobly offered to do any work gratuitously for every volunteer from his Richmond district.

To complete success in repelling any possible advance of the imprisoned tribes, Colonel Arthur, on the 25th of October, recommended the formation of *abattis*, along the rear of the *Line*, to entangle the fugitives. The forces were told to take advantage of long trunks of trees lying in a direction parallel to the line of position. By such they were to raise a palisade of sharpened sticks, cut from the Bush, which should be two or three inches thick, and driven into the ground, behind the logs, so as to prevent the passage of a man over the same. The *abattis* of trees felled for the purpose were to lie in the way. To make sure of no mistake, a pictorial illustration of the two was sent to each commander.

On the 30th of the month another Government Order congratulated the officers on their zeal in constructing these obstructives, and cutting down scrub in front.

The "Three Thumbs" often appear before the eye of the reader of the *Line* proceedings. It was a district of singular advantage to a beleaguered enemy. The three hills were about two hundred yards apart, and were covered to the summit with huge Eucalypti trees, and a dense underwood, that made it almost wholly impervious to any but Natives.



The surrounding scrub was seven miles long from east to west, and from two to four broad. It was situated half a dozen miles to the south-west of Prosser's Bay, and therefore not far from the Peninsula. This Malakoff of the foe must be stormed. As, according to the *Courier's* Special Correspondent, "into this ambush the great body of the Blacks have *embowered* themselves," the place must be turned. To quote still from the Dr. Russell of the period: "The difficulties in accomplishing this are of course immense, but we trust not insurmountable, and the thing must be done."

Accordingly, the siege was laid in due form. Three hundred of the very pick of the corps entered the Lines of the fortress, while others stretched themselves like a wall of circumvallation around the entrenched camp. The enemy were known to be there. The invading and advancing force came now and then upon native fires, still smouldering. They saw chippings from newly-formed spears and waddies. But the persons of the savages were never to be seen. The Europeans, when unable to force the leafy, thorny breastworks, stood, like the modern artillerymen upon the Crimean heights, and threw a heavy fire upon the fortress which they could not gain. A continual discharge of musketry would, it was conjectured, drive out the concealed foe; and, once in the more open glade, his capture would be certain. The anxious Governor directed the assault here and there, with encouraging enforcements of Roman virtue, and hopeful expectations of a triumphant return with handcuffed captives.

Alas! when the exhausted troops entered this Sebastopol of the forest, they found it deserted of man, and silent but for the crackling of the flames. The enemy had yielded the fortification, and had retired to even stronger Redans.

This severe disappointment was not the only trial. As the few big, pattering drops gave warning of the coming storm, so rumours of movements in the rear of the *Line* indicated the outburst of new and more appalling outrages. Word came that defenceless homes were attacked by the enraged and hunted Natives. A hut near Jerusalem was robbed, and a poor woman speared to death. Fires began to redden the sky, and shrieks of terror told the tale of woe. A letter from Perth said that one hundred and fifty had



burst through the *Cordon*, and were plundering to the rear of Major Gray's, at Avoca. Thirty were seen and chased by the intrepid John Batman, who was successful in securing a good part of them, and *without bloodshed*.

The Launceston papers were annoyed at the defenceless state of the north, and asked why all the effort of the colony should be directed, to the alarm and desertion of settlements, for the capture of two tribes—those of Oyster Bay and Big River—as if others were not as sanguinary elsewhere.

A northern magistrate wrote of four men being speared near Launceston, and said, "I have no person I can send after these Blacks. I have not one man that I can spare, nearly all the constables being out of the county, *catching at the Blacks in Buckingham*."

Such stories increased the anxiety of the Governor to hurry on the movements of the East Bay Neck. Every officer was sure that, though some might have escaped the meshes of the net, the majority were still in front of the *Line*, and near the Forrestier's Peninsula. Forty parties of seven each, with four days' provisions, were sent forward. One of the Leaders told me that he saw in the Peninsula itself evidences that the Aborigines had been there, though not able to say how long before his reconnoitring. He saw sticks set up in the forest, stuck in the soil, pointing directions for those following.

At length the Colonel commanding believed that the time had come for the final charge—the "Up, Guards, and at them" stage of the war. On the last day of October he issued an address to the Commanders. In that he said:

"A few days must now terminate the great work in the most satisfactory manner, and His Excellency earnestly hopes that the leaders will, for the remaining short period, continue to show the excellent spirit which has all along been so conspicuous in their parties, for they will perceive that the advance of the scouring parties will render redoubled vigilance necessary on the part of those who guard the *Line*, as the Natives, when disturbed in the interior, will undoubtedly increase their efforts to break through the position."

This was followed by another Government Notice, relative to the final operations, and dated the same day. The order closed thus:—



“By this movement, which should, if possible, be effected by twelve o'clock on Monday, the line will remain of its original strength, and the scouring parties will be in readiness to advance, which they will do as soon as the vacancies have been closed. These parties will then advance towards the south-east, driving the Natives in that direction, or capturing them, and on the fourth day, will reach East Bay Neck, where they will receive further orders.

“The investing line which will remain in position, must, during these four decisive days, put forth every effort to prevent the possibility of the Natives passing through them, as the tribes will naturally redouble their attempts to pass when they are disturbed in the interior.”

When the force was thus extended from Sorell to the sea, the “Long Black Line” extended thirty miles, and gave a space of forty-five yards between the men. The right wing was at Sorell, the left at Spring Bay, and the centre at the White Marsh. The *Neck* was gained. All were in excited expectation. Every possible precaution was taken to prevent escape. The very shore was watched. The capturing parties were told off. The *Neck* was crossed, the Peninsula entered, the search made, *but nothing found! Not a Black was there!*

The *Line* had proved so far a failure, though its indirect advantages were great, as the Natives were shown the formidable resources of Government, and the absolute necessity for their submission to authority.

The work was over, and the labourers could leave the field. The Rev. Mr. West, in his ‘History of Tasmania,’ has expressively written: “The Settler-Soldiers returned to their homes, their shoes worn out, their garments tattered, their hair long and shaggy, with beards unshaven, their arms tarnished, but neither blood-stained nor disgraced.”

The cost of this expedition to the Government was acknowledged to be thirty thousand pounds—a considerable and welcome expenditure to many of the colonists; though, considering other losses, and private outlay, Mr. G. A. Robinson, who was ever opposed to the project, spoke thus of it publicly: “The entire cost to the Colony was upwards of seventy thousand pounds, and the result was the capture of *one Black.*”



An English paper afterwards made merry over the subject, having satisfied itself that the circumstances were these :— that a soldier had killed a Native, and, if punished for the fault, all would have been well ; that as this was not done, the Blacks arose in wrath ; and, lastly, that it had taken 6000 Europeans to quell their revolt !!

But the worthy Governor was “game” to the last, and, conscious of having done his best, professed to be satisfied. He dismissed his army with dignity, acknowledged their service with gratitude, and foresaw their speedy deliverance from Native troubles.

His parting Order, November 26th, 1830, held forth the belief that future good would follow the efforts thus made. The poor creatures, seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, might now be induced to surrender. He could not contemplate their possible extermination but as “an event fearfully to be apprehended.” He was happy to announce the tidings of the capture of a tribe in the North, without bloodshed. He confessed his conviction that “it would be in vain to expect any reformation in these savages while allowed to remain in their native state.” Those Natives already secured, about thirty, would form the nucleus of an asylum on some neighbouring island.

At a self-congratulatory meeting of the *Liners*, held at Hobart Town, on December 22nd, 1830, resolutions were passed denouncing the Blacks, while praising the plans and deeds of the Governor. Public dinners became the order of the day throughout the colony. Should not colonists rejoice, when Government had spent among them thirty thousand pounds of British money ?

While the loud hurrah of exulting meetings, the jingling of convivial glasses, and the trumpet note of Government House, fell on the ear as symbols of rejoicing after victory, there boomed in the distance the sound of conflict. From the depths of forest, and from the expanse of plains, a cry of horror was heard. Men returned to their habitations to find but smouldering ruins, and sought their families to behold but ghastly corpses. Wives waited the return of husbands, transfixed with spears. Mothers *coo-ed* for children, brained by waddies. The wrath of an infuriated race was unappeased, and the memory of their murdered kindred was yet unavenged.



The country, scoured in vain for their presence, now echoed with the shrieks of their victims.

And what were to be the future operations against them? Were fresh commandoes in preparation? Were new and more vigorous assaults to be made upon those naked savages? If the thousands of men, with the thousands of pounds spent, were insufficient to overcome the feeble and dislocated bands of sable wanderers, were more men and greater expenses to be employed?

When all the power of a strong Government, and the war-like appliances of advanced civilization, were exhausted in the vain attempt, the simple influence of kindness in the heart of a brave man subdued these barbarians; and, bound with the mighty cords of manly sympathy, the brutal bloodshedders were conducted in triumph to the city of their enemies, and prevailed upon in peace to forsake the home of their youth, and the graves of their fathers.

Having been at one time favoured with the reflections upon this interesting epoch of Colonial History by the Hon. John Helder Wedge, I beg to publish the following extract from his letter:—

“A plan of the expedition, and the carrying it out in detail, was, as might be expected from the political feeling of hostility that was entertained against the head of the Government, criticized and commented upon in no measured terms: and these criticisms were not unaccompanied with some leaven of personal abuse. I thought at the time, and I still think, that the circumstances which imperatively required that an attempt should be made to put an end to the deadly warfare that was carried on between the occupiers of the out-stations and the Natives, and mostly to the advantage of the latter, were not considered with that liberality of feeling to which they were entitled. Frequent, and almost daily, representations were made to the Government of the depredations and murders committed by the Natives. Neither sawyers, splitters, shepherds, nor herdsmen could attend to their avocations with safety; nor could the solitary hut-keeper show himself out of doors, without the danger of being speared, even when not the least suspicion was entertained of there being anything to apprehend. A general feeling of insecurity was felt throughout the colony; and a demand, as with one voice,



was made that the Government should adopt measures for the greater security of the colonists and their property. I believe there was scarcely any possessing a knowledge of the country and experienced in traversing the forests, and knew anything of the habits of the Natives, who anticipated any other result than a failure of the expedition, so far as their capture was concerned. And I was led to believe, being present when the Lieut.-Governor was speaking on the subject, that few were less sanguine of success than His Excellency."

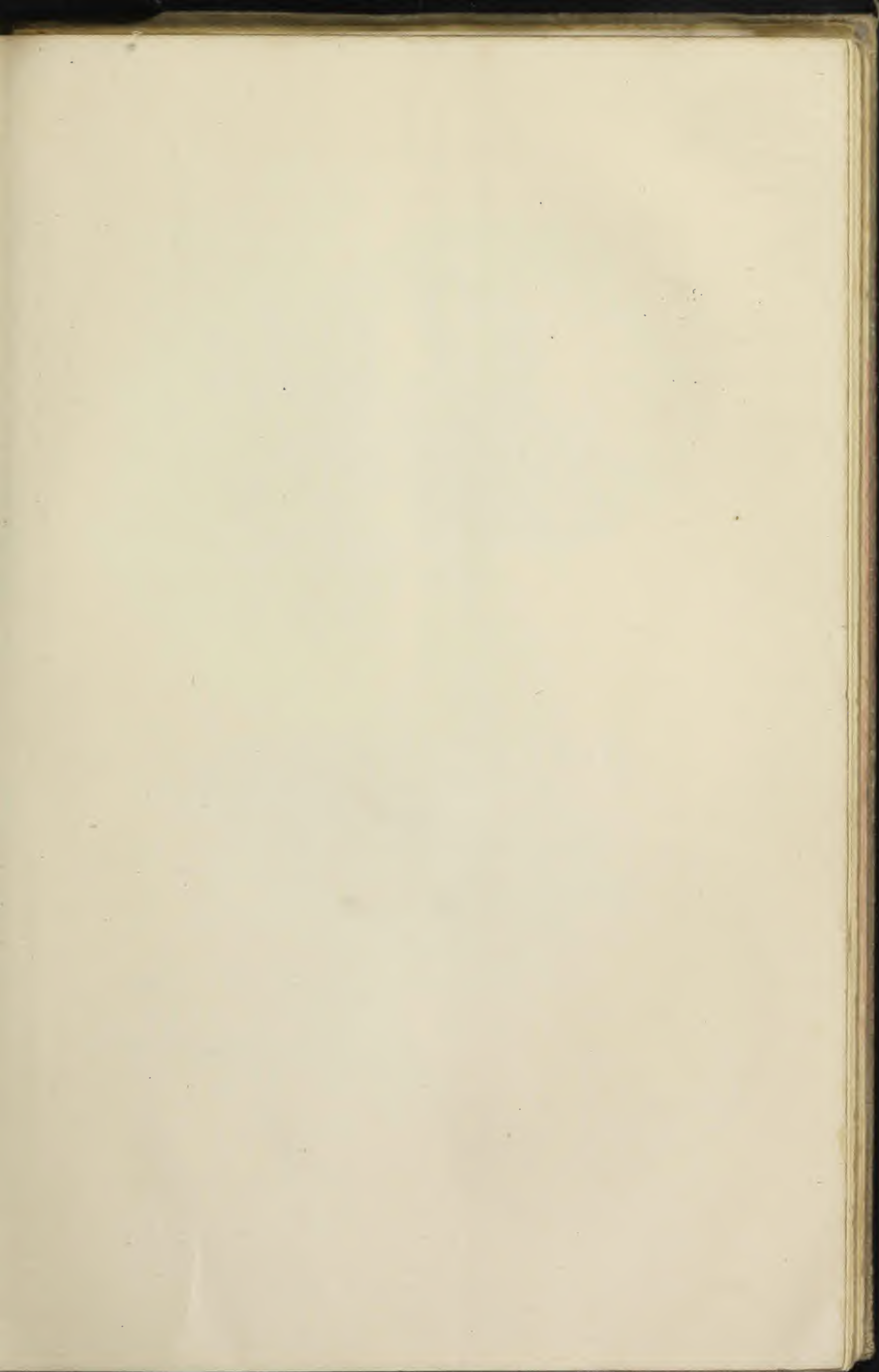
He thus closes: "I could not at the time suggest, nor have I since been able to surmise, how the forces could have been otherwise employed, which would have afforded a greater chance of success—nor did I ever meet with any of the fault-finders who could do so."

A year had passed, and one of their great jubilees was approaching for the Aborigines. This was the season of swans' eggs, so favourite a food with the people of the forest. It was a time of tribal reunion, the anniversary of family greetings and festive joy. A wooded, rocky point of land projected into the eastern waters; it was known as the Schouten Peninsula. Too barren and rough for colonization, too distant for a visit, it was a secure asylum for the feathered race—a fitting scene for swan-like love. This was the place, the period, the occasion, of annual pilgrimages to the Aborigines. A large party, a mingling of tribes, had taken advantage of the lull after the storm of war, and had ventured by stealthy steps to the old spot. But their tracks had been sighted, their destination guessed, and their extermination was at once resolved upon.

The alarm was sounded. Nothing seemed easier than their capture. Here was the proper locality for *Line* operations. A *Cordon* could be drawn across the narrow isthmus, and the Blacks would be secured at leisure.

Troops, constables, settlers, gathered in joyful confidence at the gateway of the Peninsula. It was at the close of October, 1831, the loveliest season of the bright little island, the spring of beauty and hope. The Neck was but a mile across, and upon this the Europeans took up their position. It was a highly romantic region. Five cones threw up their forest heads far above the gigantic *Eucalypti* of the valleys.









PATTY, THE RING-TAILED OPOSSUM.

(Photographed by MR. C. A. WOOLLEY, 1865.)



WAPPERTY, A TASMANIAN WOMAN.

(Photographed by MR. C. A. WOOLLEY, 1866.)



They stood as guardian genii to protect the last home of the wasted people. Their bastion-like masses were strengthened by intricate scrub and pathless woods, whose black shadows fell upon the hostile band in front. The enemy sought to gain the barbican by fire. Soon the flames were seen penetrating the dark gorges, and climbing the rocky steeps. The colonial force constructed their huts, established their sentries, and kept up the vast fires for observation and destruction. Gradually long, black lanes were made through the thicket, and fresh arrivals from the townships around assured the Whites of victory.

It was full moon at the time of a visit of a friend, who subsequently described to me his admiration of this stirring scene. The soft light fell so calmly upon the roaring flames, as if to rebuke their violence, and each hilly cone, wreathed with fire, vainly, like Hercules of old, sought relief from the fatal robe.

But when nothing but charred timber or smouldering ashes remained, and when the moon had evening after evening decreased its light till darkness rested upon the encampment at night, then the time for watchfulness arrived, lest the imprisoned should escape. Troops were gradually assembling; and while some guarded the entrance with dogs, fires, and arms, others were to pass down the peninsula and seize or kill the egg-gatherers.

In fear, but determination, the poor creatures waited for the favourable moment. A night of misty blackness came. They had crept as closely as they dared to the *Lines*, their very dogs preserving silence, and then, with a bound and cry, followed by their yelping friends, they dashed by the fires and guards, and gained the dark forest beyond in safety. The only captures made by the formidable besiegers were a few young puppies, distanced in the flight.

#### CAPTURE PARTIES.

Allusion has already been made to the system of offering a premium of five pounds for the capture of a Black.

It was from the very perplexity of affairs that Colonel Arthur sought the advice as well as co-operation of the most



experienced and intelligent of the settlers. The leading magistrates were addressed by circular. In reply, James Simpson, Esq., J.P., of Campbell Town, wrote, Nov. 18th, 1828, recommending the following up of one particular tribe, with all available strength, night and day, till fairly run down and secured. He thought the engagement of native women serviceable. While transcribing Mr. Simpson's letter, I read on the turned-down corner, in the handwriting of the upright Colonel Arthur: "The expedient of taking some of the women may be attempted—in fact, anything founded in prudence, and prosecuted with humanity and firmness, I shall approve."

Thomas Anstey, Esq., J.P., of Oatlands, near the centre of the island, took the most active part. Among his suggestions, forwarded Nov. 14th, 1828, were these: That parties should be organized, under suitable leaders, to be in pursuit, and that a few active men should be selected to look after Native fires at day, lie in ambush near, and make their capture in the cold morning twilight. "To rid the country of this scourge," he adds, "a considerable number of troops will be required." It was his opinion that the employment of prisoners, or at least of men seeking an extension of freedom, would be most advantageous, as these would endeavour to obtain a free pardon by their labours.

The Governor resolved to try the scheme, and directed the magistrate to make a selection as a trial. By the end of November four had been chosen. Three were ticket-of-leave men seeking emancipation—John Hopkins, Samuel May, and William Wakeman, all well acquainted with the native life in the Bush. The fourth, still in the primary class of bondage, was John Danvers, a man of great ability and energy.

Other persons in a better position of life were engaged; as Messrs. Gilbert Robertson, John Batman, Jorgen Jorgenson, Nicholas Tortosa, James Hopkins, Mayhew Tattersall, John Eldon, W. Grant, R. Tyrrell, Peter Scott, W. Wilson, George James, W. Holmes, Alexander McKay, Surridge, Parish, Emmett, Brodribb, Gorringe, &c. Mr. Roberts took four Bruni Blacks after a Port Davey tribe. Mr. Tortosa was to receive one thousand acres, in addition to the five pounds' bounty, if he caught twenty in twelve months.

But little was really done until the energies and experience



of Mr. Anstey were brought into requisition. In May, 1829, all leaders of parties were directed to make their monthly reports to him. It was at his suggestion that twelve men were placed under the authority of Mr. John Batman, six with Mr. Nicholas of Campbell Town, five with Mr. Sherwin of the Clyde, and five with Mr. Doran of New Norfolk. A man named John Small was promised a free pardon should he succeed in bringing in ten captives during the year of his engagement. While five pounds was paid for the possession of an adult, and two pounds for a child, a promise of grants of land was held out to the leaders.

Mr. Anstey entered heartily upon his work. In devotion to duty, he reminds one of the ancient Spartan. An anecdote is recorded of him that suggests the parting word of the Spartan mother—"Return a victor, or upon your shield." When his son, then out with the *Line* after the Blacks, suffering from the hardships of the Bush in an inclement season, wished to return home, Mr. Anstey forwarded this decided reply: "Stay till all is lawfully dismissed. If you return before, the house will be closed against you."

His children were energetic and intelligent like himself. One son became an influential legislator in South Australia. Another (Chisholm Anstey) was well known as a prominent member of the British House of Commons. His son George distinguished himself in the Black War. On the 27th of July, 1830, some Natives were heard prowling about the farm in the night. Heading a small number of servants, the lad, being then but sixteen, dashed after the enemy. Fortunately for the pursuers, the ground was covered with snow, and the track could be readily followed in the darkness. The tribe was gained, a charge was made, four were captured, and the rest fled in terror. Not a shot was fired. Among the spoils were fourteen dogs, fifteen blankets, and five spears. The colony rang with acclamations at the daring deed, and the courage of many a drooping Bush tracker revived. The Governor honoured the brave boy with a *Gazette* notice, and the gift of five hundred acres of land.

The sequel of the incident is soon told. Three of the four were of the weaker sex. When they were being led to Hobart Town by the constables, the man shammed illness in the wattle-perfumed valley of Bagdad. The constables



were compelled to place the agonized fellow in a wheelbarrow, and trundle him to a hut for the night. Leaving him there to groan in peace, the guardians indulged in some sleep, being perfectly assured of the safety of the prisoner. The dark and subtle captive climbed the chimney, in the silence of night, and regained his forest mates.

One part of Mr. Anstey's scheme, the employment of soldiers, was not so desirable. They were slow in movement, they needed Bush-craft, they ill sorted with civilians, they were soon demoralized, they stood little fatigue, they were often cruel, and their red coats were ready signals. A corporal with a party of the 40th earned no reputation by a most atrocious massacre of a large number of men, women, and children, upon whose camp-fires they came suddenly.

The difficulty which our troops have often experienced while Bush-fighting with the Maories calls to mind a project brought forward in June, 1829, by Mr. Horace Rowcroft, and seconded by Major Gray, to introduce a number of New Zealanders into Van Diemen's Land. It was contended that, as they in their country sold slaves for a musket each, they would be quite willing to catch Tasmanian Black-fellows at the same rate. Their great intelligence, their crafty policy, and their warlike bearing, with the use of weapons better adapted than "Brown Bess" to forest contests, made the plan acceptable to many. But the humane Colonel Arthur feared the massacre of his black subjects by the cannibal Maories, and rejected the proposal.

The "bounty five," as the capture money was styled, was not stopped till June 5th, 1832, when the head-hunters were informed by the Governor that the reward was no longer offered, because the "present tranquil state of the Colony had rendered it unnecessary."

When caught, the Natives were not easily held. A good smearing of opossum grease on their naked skins prevented a secure grasp. Thus, four were one day surrounded, and held for a time, at St. Paul's Plains; but three managed to wriggle themselves free. The ever-watchful *Courier* hastened to publish an infallible cure. "Some persons," quoth the Paper, "adopt the plan of getting behind them, and thrusting the arms beneath the armpits of the Black, to bring the



hands round behind the neck or head, and, being thus clasped, completely secure and overpower him."

Some independent parties were highly successful. Mr. Howell, of the *Shannon*, obtained a thousand acres for his exploits. Mr. James Parish, an Australian by birth, and a pilot, was said to have been the means of securing no less than twenty-two Aborigines, and a host of dogs, close to Swan Island, on which he managed to place them. Another person caught a Native, called Tommy Notoes, from having lost these useful members. One man escaped after being first secured, but was wounded by a shot in his retreat. He managed, however, to gain the shore, and attempted to swim away; but, soon exhausted, he was retaken, and his wound was dressed. Placed in a hut for security, he again escaped, and was not recovered. Two were caught by a shrewd fellow who exposed a sugar-bag in the Bush, and then hid himself till his victims were in the sweets.

The Natives were terribly harassed by these roving parties. Their sufferings were severe, especially from their fear to light a fire to warm their bodies, or to cook their food. Children and weak persons rapidly sunk from fatigue and want, or were hurried by violence to a grave that would shield them from their implacable foes. Opposing craft to force, the men of the woods concealed themselves in chosen retreats, kept up a vigilant look-out, and knew how, at fitting times, to silence their faithful and obedient dogs. They were accustomed to indicate their way through the pathless wilderness by the Indian mode of breaking branches, or of pointing sticks in the ground, so that their fellows might track them to the camp. But, pursued by the Whites, these sticks, as previously agreed upon, were placed right in some places, and wrong in others. Sharp points and sharp stones were left just above ground to wound the feet of those following them; as many of these wore home-made moccasins, a severe laming would attend a misfooting.

The guides of the parties were either white Bushmen, or Natives. The latter were not to be depended upon; and some acknowledged, when on Flinders Island, having brought the leaders near the sought-for tribe, and then refused to go further, or led off in another direction. Black Jack, who was out with Mr. Gilbert Robertson, told Mr. Jorgenson, that after



he had been beaten by that gentleman, for some supposed fault, he was often upon the track of his countrymen, but would not trace.

Mungo was an intelligent lad, and did good service. He was the son of an influential chieftain, and accompanied both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Batman, but early died of disease.

As the wild people were caught, they were transferred to the nearest gaol. Some were at first taken to Mr. G. A. Robinson at Bruni; or, under his care, to the establishment at Newtown, a couple of miles out of Hobart Town. Mr. Stirling was in charge of the latter asylum, during the journey of his chief to Port Davey. Such an establishment was soon found of little use, as numbers came in, and numbers went out again.

In spite of the success of some of the roving parties in capture, for 236 were secured by the end of 1832, it was felt that great destruction of life had taken place. Mr. Carr, manager then for the Van Diemen's Land Agricultural Company, calculated upon the effects of the "Five Pounds' Proclamation," as it was called, and said, "The Proclamation as usual will enjoin the sparing the defenceless, and that the people are not to be killed, but taken alive; and the way in which it will be acted upon will be by *killing nine for one taken*." Some such feeling was evidently shared by the authorities; for a Government Notice, appearing on August 20th, 1830, bears upon the subject, and again utters a warning against cruelty.

"The Lieutenant-Governor," says the command, "has learned, with much regret, that the Government Order of the 25th of February last, offering certain rewards for the capture of the Aborigines, appears in some recent instances to have been misapprehended; and, in order to remove the possibility of any future misunderstanding on this important subject, His Excellency has directed it to be distinctly notified, that nothing can be more opposed to the spirit of the above-named Order, and to all that of the different Proclamations and Orders which preceded it, than to offer any sort of violence or restraint to such of the aboriginal Natives as may approach the European inhabitants with friendly views:—the reward was offered for the capture of such Natives only as were committing aggressions on the inhabitants of the Settled



Districts, from which it was the object of the Government to expel them with every degree of humanity that was practicable, when all efforts for their conciliation had proved abortive."

Among the Leaders of Parties the name of JOHN BATMAN stands out in bold relief.

Though only one of the ordinary Leaders of Parties after the Aborigines, yet, as the most prominent of these, the most esteemed by the Governor, and the most approved of by the Blacks, a separate notice might be given of his part in the war. There is an additional reason for bringing him thus to the front, because of the great work he was afterwards the means of accomplishing, in 1835—the colonization of Port Phillip—and thus becoming the *Founder of the prosperous Colony of Victoria*.

John Batman was an Australian, being born at Parramatta, in New South Wales, and subsequently becoming a farmer under the shadow of Ben Lomond, in Tasmania. For particulars of his career, the reader is referred to the Author's works on 'The Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip,' 'John Batman, the Founder of Victoria,' and 'Port Phillip Settlement.'

Of powerful frame, goodly stature, great activity, untiring energy, quick intelligence, and superior Bush-craft, he was fitted for leadership in the Black War. But, of agreeable manners, exuberant spirits, and genuine kindliness, he became the admired of men, and the favourite of women. Governor Arthur acknowledged the public efforts of Mr. Batman, and was pleased with his society, while the convict servants of his household, and the roving tribes of the island, alike felt the benevolence of his heart, and bowed before the force of his character.

That the writer be not supposed too partial toward him, other evidence will be produced. The Quaker Missionary, Mr. George Washington Walker, often spoke to me of his interest in the man, and acknowledged the correctness of the Rev. John West, the historian of Tasmania, when he stated, "To Mr. Batman belongs the praise of mingling humanity with severity, of perceiving human affections he was commissioned to resist. He certainly began in the midst of conflict and bloodshed to try the softer influence of conciliation



and charity,—being one of the few who entertained a strong confidence in the power of kindness.” Mr. Melville, another colonial historian, asserts that he “proceeded not with the sword, but with the olive branch.” Honest old Captain Robson, who was with him in an early trip to Port Phillip, gave me this testimony of his friend: “He was a brave, athletic, daring, resolute man, fearing nothing—neither wind nor weather. His perseverance was beyond anything I ever saw.” The Hon. J. H. Wedge adds a strong recommendation of his ancient companion. Wm. Robertson, Esq., J.P., who knew him intimately, has this observation: “His character for veracity and probity cannot, with regard to the truth, be in the slightest degree impugned.” Mr. Hamilton Hume, the veteran explorer, who walked overland from Sydney to the site of Geelong in 1824, was born in the same colonial village as Mr. Batman, and was enthusiastic in writing to me of his good personal qualities, and his Bush-abilities.

Mr. Batman was called from his home, and a fine family of daughters, to take the field after the marauding Natives. He had previously been, from love of adventure not less than the patriotic impulse of a citizen, a chaser of flying Bushrangers, and the means of the capture of notable ruffians. Delighting in danger, and courting conflict, he was among the foremost to proffer his services to the Government in that perilous time. In his official letter, dated from his estate, Kingston, Ben Lomond, June 15th, 1829, he writes: “I have formed the determination, provided it meets with His Excellency’s approbation, under certain conditions, of devoting some time, and all the exertion of which I am capable, toward bringing in alive some of that much-injured and unfortunate race of beings.”

This gives the key to his conduct. He regarded the Natives as injured—“much injured”—and his sympathies were called forth on behalf of the unfortunate people. They were being shot down by soldiers, constables, and settlers. They were hunted down as implacable and hungry beasts. They were unpitied and undefended. He was resolved to stand in the breach. Without assuming so much as Mr. G. A. Robinson, he was actuated by a similar spirit. Not making the Christian profession that the latter did, Batman’s real



desire to save the Blacks from destruction was as pure as his. The difference, and a striking difference, between them was this—that while one took no weapons, the other did ; though that was from the old feeling of insecurity, former habits of bandit-hunting, and the resolution to fight rather than run, when he failed to conciliate. Mr. Robinson fled from his Native pursuers ; but Mr. Batman would stand and face those to the death who rejected his proposed kindness, and sought his own destruction.

The *Launceston Advertiser* of August 24th greeted his appointment with satisfaction, saying, “ We learn from good authority that Mr. John Batman is to be employed for some time as Conductor of a party of ten Crown Prisoners, part of whom are to receive emancipation, and part tickets of leave, if they behave well. Their task is to capture all the Aborigines, or as many as they possibly can.”

At once he went to work ; for we have his letter, dated Sept. 18th, giving a record of progress : “ Seeing a number of Natives approaching toward us, I ordered the men to lie down, and not to fire upon them, but, when I should whistle, to rush forward and seize them. When they approached within forty yards, I gave the signal. We all ran forward, and secured three women, two young children, three boys, and two young men.” This was brave news for the settlers, as these captured ones belonged to a troublesome tribe. The capture took place between Break-o'-Day Plains and Oyster Bay, near the east coast. Seventeen large dogs were obtained, and a considerable quantity of stolen goods—blankets, knives, clothing, &c.—fell into hand.

Unfortunately, that same month in the following year was signalized by a sad affair, a solitary instance of real warfare between Mr. Batman and the Natives. He had been penetrating the intricate forest glens of Ben Lomond, when he suddenly found himself confronted by a well-armed mob of seventy, belonging to the most sanguinary tribes of the island. A flight of spears saluted him ; and so determined an assault followed, that he was constrained to order a discharge of musketry. Although fifteen of the assailants paid the penalty of their attack, yet such was the valour of the Native warriors that only one woman and one child were made prisoners by the Europeans. The dogs, which had nobly stood beside



their dark masters, shared in their fate, for twenty were shot. Among the spoil of the camp were thirty or forty spears, fifteen feet in length.

That there was some justification for the colonial terror, and some need for armed parties to restrain attack, where unable to make peaceable terms, a letter of Mr. Batman's may afford evidence. It was written officially from Ben Lomond, and says: "I have just time to say that the Natives last Thursday week murdered two men at Oyster Bay, and the next day they beat a sawyer about to death. On Sunday after they murdered a soldier. On last Wednesday they attacked the house of Mr. Boulty, when he was absent; and if it had not been for a soldier who happened to be there, they would have murdered Mrs. Boulty and all the children. On Friday last they murdered three men at a hut belonging to Major Gray, and left a fourth for dead."

Mr. Batman was the first to employ native women as spies and guides. Mr. Robinson afterwards followed out the same plan with signal advantage. These brought intelligence of the wanderers, and, from sympathy with the benevolent views of these two leaders, induced their country people to accept of the proffered protection. They were made to understand the intentions of the Governor to remove them from the bad and cruel Whites to good hunting-grounds, which their enemies could never approach.

Three of Mr. Batman's native females succeeded on one occasion in prevailing upon nine men to come to Kingston. It so happened that the gentleman was from home, and Mrs. Batman and her daughters were much terrified at the visit. She sent over for her neighbour, Mr. Simeon Lord, who afterwards gave me a graphic account of this irruption of barbarians. He found the new-comers about as wild a collection as the country could furnish. They were all armed, and were prying most curiously, but good-humouredly, about the premises. Some were enjoying the mysteries of the mirror, and laughing at each other's transferred features. One had a girl's cap on his greasy pate, and another mounted a larger article of feminine wardrobe. They stalked about in Native costume of perfect undress, and made free with what pleased them, but carefully abstained from liberties with the household. As hungry as hunters, they made such havoc as



to lead Mr. Batman afterwards to write : " Their appetite is enormous, devouring everything they meet. They are particularly fond of half-roasted eggs of every description, geese, ducks, and hens ; it is all one—so much so, that Mrs. Batman's poultry-yard will cut but a sorry figure after the company."

The master arrived home at sundown, to the great relief of the family. He gave the party a hearty welcome, but took no measures to force them into confinement. The consequence was, that the gentry departed in the night, though returning on a subsequent day. Six having been on another occasion taken to Launceston, the Commandant, not knowing what to do with them, would have let them free, had not Mr. Batman convinced him that the poor creatures would be shot if released.

Mr. Batman, as an old ranger in the forests of New South Wales, had experience of the fine tracking powers of the New Holland Aborigines, and wished to have such auxiliaries with him in his present work. Addressing the Governor upon the subject, on March 18th, 1830, he distinguished the kind he required : " They should be got from the interior, as those about the town of Sydney are accustomed to the drinking of spirits, and have in a great measure lost their natural gift of tracking."

Colonel Arthur approved of the suggestion. Accordingly, Pigeon and Crook were procured, and continued for several years attached to Mr. Batman's person, and companions in his wonderful adventures. Years after, they and one of his old English servants went across with him to the establishment of a settlement at Port Phillip, where they discovered Buckley, the Wild White man, who had been living with the Port Phillip Blacks for thirty-two years. Such was the estimation in which the efforts of these so-called *Sydney Natives* were held, that, in 1831, others were sent for by the authorities, " to be employed," said the *Courier* of September, " as instruments, under the direction of properly-qualified persons, to conciliate and civilize the Natives of our own island."

Pigeon and Crook were despatched for the new men, who stipulated for a dollar a day, a suit of clothes, and a medal. The names of the guides were John Pigeon, John Crook,



John Waterman, William Sawyers, John Peter, and John Radley. Their native appellations were respectively Warroba, Jonninbia, Monowara, Nombardo, Bollo'bolong, and Terro'mallee.

Their conduct, real or alleged, provoked much discussion at the time. It was said they would be bloodthirsty destroyers of the poor Tasmanians, and that, instead of ameliorating their social condition, they would introduce fresh vices, and incite them to worse hostilities. The dreadful deeds of Mosquito, the Sydney monster, were paraded to the injury of the reputation of the imported guides. Perhaps no one more violently objected to their continued engagement than Mr. G. A. Robinson. Some asserted that his opposition was from spleen at their success; but he affirmed that they were untrustworthy servants, that they corrupted the Native women, and that they were drunken reprobates.

After skirmishing for a long time, the two leaders came to open rupture about the strangers. Mr. Robinson having officially complained of them, and reminded the Governor that they were from Mosquito's own part of the country, Mr. Batman combated for them. He gave instances of their good deeds, and related cases in which they had stood by him in great straits, and had one time helped him successfully to capture, without bloodshed, a mob of thirteen Aborigines.

Mr. Batman, though directed to co-operate with Major Gray, was ordered to consult the magistrate at Campbell Town, James Simpson, Esq.; to whom I have been personally much indebted for information about the early times of both Tasmania and Victoria, and who was a warm friend to poor John Batman. These two gentlemen were favourable in their reports, as may be seen from the following Government Notice of Sept. 9, 1830: "Mr. John Batman, having served the period of twelve months in pursuit of the Aborigines, the Lieutenant-Governor, placing every confidence in the certificates of James Simpson and William Gray, Esquires, J.P., as to the zeal which he has manifested, has directed a grant of two thousand acres of land to be made to him."

Conditional pardons or tickets-of-leave were given to the prisoner men who had served under Mr. Batman's orders during that period.



Mr. Batman was not indifferent to the reward of his Sydney guides. Ten pounds were presented to each. But at the end of the first year, he recommended that Pigeon and Crook should be made Bush constables, and put on the police staff. He suggested, also, that the same favour should be granted to Black Bill, a Tasmanian guide. He also procured better rations for them.

Anxious for home and rest, he retired awhile in October 1830, transferring his Sydney Blacks to his friend Mr. Cottrell. The Governor, in his despatch of November 20th, is pleased to refer to his labours thus : " Mr. Batman treated the savages with the utmost kindness, distributing to them clothing and food. They were placed under no restraint, but all the indulgence that had been pledged was manifested toward them. Mr. Batman, who has taken the most lively interest in conciliating these wretched people, and has been one of the few who supposed that they might be influenced by kindness, was, with his family, most assiduous in cultivating the best understanding."

But he never lost his interest in the work. His year of success was that in which Mr. Robinson had been able to accomplish little. After this, the operations were left in the hands of the latter, though the Ben Lomond farmer actively laboured for the good of the unhappy race. He objected to the system of clearing the island of all of them without exception, and pleaded hard for the retention of youth educated by settlers, and devoted to their service. This brought him into collision with Mr. Robinson, who was ever jealous of his intimacy with Colonel Arthur and the higher officials, and who formally complained of his keeping two Native lads on his farm near Ben Lomond.

A passage-at-arms occurred. Mr. Robinson was backed by the Aborigines' Committee of Hobart Town, while his rival had the ear of officialdom. Mr. Batman declared that he was not obstructive, but that he acted as the guardian of the boys, because their mothers, on being forwarded to Flinders Island, refused to take the lads from the kind care of the Blacks' friend. The Committee wrote to Ben Lomond, urging the removal of the two boys, stating that Mr. Robinson had mentioned the clamour among the exiles at their absence. Lieutenant Darling, the beloved Commandant at Flinders,



espoused the side of Batman, and addressed a letter to him, March 25th, 1834, declaring that the mother of Jackey had told him, in answer to his question: "No—no—no! let him stay at Mr. Batman's, till he gets a *long* fellow." Mr. Darling continues: "I have seen Jackey (then ten years old), driving the plough at your farm, and have expressed to you my admiration of his shrewdness and intelligence, and my hope that under the care and kindness with which both he and little Benny are evidently treated by your family, they would one day become useful members of society." He wished that all the children at Flinders were similarly placed. Ultimately Mr. Robinson gained his end, and the partly civilized were placed with the wild ones.

I have in my possession, through the favour of Mr. Weire, Town Clerk of Geelong, who married Mr. Batman's daughter Eliza, the little memorandum book in which the leader of the roving party kept his Journal, from March 3rd to September 29th, 1830. Outside, it is directed from his farm, Kingston.

A slight analysis of this Journal will illustrate the labours of the man. The scene is laid about Ben Lomond.

This grand pile of rocks lies toward the north-eastern corner of Tasmania, and is the source of the North Esk and South Esk, whose waters unite at Launceston. The district is one of great interest to the geologist. It is above forty years since I had the pleasure of travelling through it on my way to the East Coast. Leaving the neighbouring farm to that where Mr. Batman lived in the olden times, I traversed the carboniferous and Silurian country of Fingal, crossing several creeks that had cut through the bituminous coal, and glancing at the quartz veins of the palæozoic rocks from which the gold is now being extracted. The granite succeeds, and carries one on to the shore. Overflowing these various formations, and presenting most fantastic appearances when prismatic, there is the greenstone. This ancient igneous rock constitutes the huge bulk of Ben Lomond, which I found to be a table nearly eight miles in extent, with an elevation of five thousand feet. The whole neighbourhood of Ben Lomond was a vast forest, varied by scrub and huge boulders. Lofty isolated hills of carboniferous order, as Mount Nicholas, are to be observed, with remarkable caps



of greenstone, telling the old story of denudation. It was amidst such a region that our leader and his party spent the winter and spring, watching for the Aborigines.

A little story of the author's Bush experience may afford the reader further insight into the nature of the place and the characters one might have met in the period. The time of my visit was some seven years only after the departure of Mr. Batman for residence in Port Phillip.

I started from near Kingston, under the guidance of a convict shepherd, who carried the *swag*, and led the way. He entertained me with narratives of bushranging and native hunting, to lighten my toilsome march. After travelling for about ten hours over very rough ground, the sun was setting before the welcome sound of a dog broke the silence of the mountain solitude, and guided us to the lonely hut of old Boco, the one-eyed tenant of Ben Lomond. He was lord of the wastes, the supposed shepherd of a flock feeding on the sparse vegetation of the rocky slopes.

He received me heartily, and proclaimed his ample store of mutton, damper, and tea, for my entertainment, objecting to the opening of the haversack which my companion carried. The hut was of slabs of unhewn timber, rudely plastered with clay. The floor was of mother earth. The huge fireplace opened into the hut; and, being unprovided with a chimney, furnished the inmates with a sight of the stars, or a sensation of rain, according to the weather. The *billy* was swung, the tea was made, the chops were fried, the damper was brought, and the weary wanderers were soon at ease.

But the company—it is time they were introduced. Old Boco, who had passed through some singular passages of history, and whose hut was, perhaps slanderously, supposed the receptacle of curiosities, surreptitiously conveyed there from the regions below, was of most forbidding aspect, torn and rent by years and usage, like the mountain of which he seemed the genius. He was not alone. A number of friends had dropped in. Two shepherds were seeking lost animals. Three men were out kangarooing. Three were servants sent to cut posts and rails for fencing. Two were constables on the tramp. All were of the convict class. Even these were not unattended. Every man seemed to have a dog; and the noise these creatures made through the night would have



disturbed the rest of any but Bushmen. A new-comer, when informed of the character of his associates, might have felt uncomfortable.

The supper over, the chat commenced vigorously. An unnecessary apology was made to the *gentleman* for the absence of grog. It had been all drunk, and Boco had nothing but good Ben Lomond ale (water) to offer. A very dirty pack of cards gave amusement to one party, some indulged in a song, while others smoked before the blazing logs. Being all early risers, there were speedy arrangements for bed. My guide had an opossum rug for me, which he disposed on one of the three side bunks of rough slabs. As soon as I had settled myself, a peculiarly odorous splitter enveloped himself in a filthy blanket, retaining his boots, and occupied the spare place beside me. The rest folded their rugs or blankets around them, and coiled about on the mud and moistened floor.

Some were not ready for sleep, and called upon a scholarly mate to give them some literature. He produced a disreputable looking book, and brought the light near him, as he lay upon the floor. The candlestick was a disabled tin pannikin. The tallow was the fat of the chops poured off from the hissing pan. The wick was a piece of Old Boco's well-worn shirt, and gave a flickering and smoky flame. In a monotonous manner, Jack read a very characteristic work, considering the country and company—"The Wonderful Escapes of Jack Sheppard!"

Some such associations, with the addition of native society, probably surrounded the rude hut erected for the Ben Lomond sojourn of Mr. Batman.

To return to the Journal. The entries are very brief, often roughly and incorrectly written, but evidently made honestly on the days in question. The only thing noticed outside of his work was the eclipse of the moon on March 9th, when "not one bit of her was to be seen." The Governor took much notice of his proceedings, and Mr. Batman rode occasionally to Launceston or Hobart Town to confer with His Excellency. We read: "Had a long talk with His Excellency;" "Had a long conversation respecting my expedition against the Aborigines." Having some trouble to get a couple of women out from gaol at Launceston, he had to see



the Governor before securing their liberty. Colonel Arthur promised Pigeon "a great deal, if he could succeed in bringing in a tribe on friendly terms."

Mr. Batman, after several long and painful journeys, with fruitless return, was obliged to have a substantial hut made as a *depôt* for provisions, as well as a home for the party. From this centre he despatched his people on search, though often enough there is the entry, "No sight of the Natives." He would send the men by themselves, or with the native women. Thus we have, "The women left this morning with Gunner, Pigeon, Crook, and Black Bill, to scour the country." For reasons not explained, the women "expressed a wish to go away by themselves." They promised to bring in the tribe if permitted to travel alone, and the leader started them from the east end of Ben Lomond. He gave them complete supplies, besides "three dogs, knives, pipes, &c., to carry with them." Three men took the burden some considerable distance for them. His faith was strong in their intentions, for we have him writing: "I have every hope of the women bringing in their tribe." His confidence was not misplaced. When he sent either his European or Sydney men with them, he would not permit them to take fire-arms. Mr. Robinson was not alone in his belief in moral suasion.

Occasionally he was directed to go in pursuit of some mischievous gang. He came too late to catch the murderers of three men at Major Gray's. Hearing of a mob attacking Mr. Hooper's place, he rode hastily off. His day's record says: "The house surrounded by Natives. I galloped down, and the whole of them fled. The first thing we saw was the dead body of Mr. Hooper, and a great number of goods lying outside the house."

He was quite ready to acknowledge something to the credit of the foes of the settlers. Ordered off to another reported scene of outrage, where it was said that Mr. Newland's man had been killed, he arrived, "and found the whole of it to be false. The man (who originated the story) was a cripple, or I should have taken him before a magistrate." Another notice evidences his good feeling: "They went also into a house where a woman was, took one blanket, and did not hurt her. This shows they do not commit murders when they might." After another ride, upon a report, he returned,



as he wrote, "without seeing the least trace of the Natives, and think the whole of the reports to be false."

Among the walking feats, we have noticed fifteen, twenty, and twenty-five miles a day. The wet and cold sorely tried the party; but the snow, three or four feet thick for a week at a time, shut them up in their secluded mountain hut, or detained them on the lower plains.

There was under the rough exterior of this powerful Bushman no small share of the tenderness belonging more to the other sex. Several entries in his Journal prove this. He was very fond of children, and very gentle to women. His notice of April 6th is: "The women here all day. This evening, the young child, belonging to one of the women, that sucked at the breast, died. I put it in a box, and buried it at the top of the garden. She seemed much affected at the loss of the child, and cried much." The next day's entry commences, "This morning I found the woman, that lost her child, over the grave, and crying much."

As John Batman had no fluency in writing, and confined himself to the fewest possible sentences in his official reports, as well as the most barren statements in his journal, it is pleasing to notice this evidence of his natural good feeling. Even while out on this service, his care for the black women was conspicuous. Such entries as the following are worthy of record: "The black women could not walk well." "Caught a kangaroo for the women." "The women much tired: made them some tea, and gave them bread and mutton." "The black women arrived here about twelve o'clock: made them tea, gave them bread, &c." He was evidently very uneasy about the long absence of the women on two occasions. For a whole fortnight we have the entry of "No signs of the women." When he heard that in their search after their countrymen they had been snowed up, he was much concerned about sending them relief. Then, upon their return, he would not for several days permit them to leave the hut, because of the snow.

Mr. Gilbert Robertson, one time chief constable at Richmond, a man of powerful frame, possessed qualities admirably fitting him for a leader. Thoroughly educated, of independent



character, with a relish for public life, he occupied a prominent position in political affairs at a time when it was indiscreet to speak, and dangerous to write. He had the boldness to expose evils, and the temerity to confront authority. He was prepared to vindicate his views in the presence of His Excellency, as well as expound them through the press before citizens. A little time-serving would have saved him much loss, if it had not led to better fortune. Co-operating with Messrs. Gregson and Melville, he earnestly contended for the emancipation of colonists, and the end of irresponsible government, content to suffer with others the odium of their opposition, and the penalty of obnoxious laws.

It is fitting that the men who now enjoy such extension of franchise in Australia should cast a grateful glance on the memory of those who bled in their purse, and ached in their imprisoned bodies, that British settlers might possess British rights. It is not so long ago that one of the worthy fathers of the colonial press, and one of the fathers of colonial freedom, wandered through London a too-forgotten and neglected man. In the feebleness of advanced age, with the pressure of impecunious circumstances, he could stand forth as a man who, with all the strength of conscious intellect, and the resolution of an unquailing will, could endure the confiscation of fortune, and the indignity of a gaol, while battling against the despotic *régime* of the past, and helping to usher in a brighter and a better day. Such a man was Henry Melville, once proprietor of the Hobart Town 'Colonial Times,' and the author of 'Australasia,' 'Veritas,' &c.

Mr. Robertson had not been unsuccessful, if even the capture of the bold chief Eumarra had been his sole performance. This man and four others were taken in October 1829. Eumarra became the friend and helpmate of Mr. Robertson. Upon his retirement from service in 1830, the leader secured a thousand acres of land.

Mr. Anthony Cottrell was a valuable leader. In December 1831, he laid hold of two men and a woman, and made such good use of them as to gain their assistance to secure the rest of their tribe toward the north-east. In the following November he made an excellent haul. His advocacy of the principles of the Conciliatory Mission may be gathered from his official report, in which he was proud to say : "There was



not the least force used toward the people that joined us on this occasion, and they were allowed to retain their spears, &c., and to do as they pleased."

He subsequently went to the west coast, and followed after the Arthur River tribe that had speared a Sydney Native, and had forced Mr. G. A. Robinson to run for his life. Two of his men were unhappily drowned near the mouth of Pieman's River. On January 10th, 1833, he fell in with the tribe of twenty-six, some thirty miles from the Macquarie Harbour Heads, and would have met with a favourable response to his appeals, but for the vindictive jealousy of Edick. They had agreed to submit, and stayed one night and part of a day with him; but afterwards, when passing through a dense scrub, Edick persuaded the party to leave their white friends. Mr. Cottrell could not detain them, as he was unprovided with trinkets and provisions to induce them to remain.

However, he gallantly pressed forward in pursuit, and saw them, at length, on the opposite shore, at the mouth of the Arthur River. Rapidly constructing a raft, with the assistance of Mr. Robinson's son, then with him, he attempted to cross; but the frail vessel struck against a bar, and was wrecked. Nothing daunted, Stewart, one of his men, manufactured a rude canoe. In the mean time, Mr. Cottrell saw some on the other bank ready to join if they could get over. As the exploit would be one demanding not merely courage, but good swimming qualities, a Sydney Black of the party undertook the work. One by one did he succeed in securing the voluntary prisoners. There were five men, two women, and a child. The last time of crossing, Edick observed the treason, and rushed down to the shore with his spearmen. The Sydney man lightened the bark, by leaping into the water, leaving his last rescued one to paddle more swiftly and safely to the other bank. Rapidly came the storm of spears; but, instead of blindly swimming onward, the wary New Hollander watched the progress of a spear, dived, and swam under the surface, rose for a breath, and dived again before the next missile could reach the spot of his last appearance. The brave fellow gained the shelter of his friends, but was thoroughly exhausted with his effort. Mr. Cottrell took the eight who came to him on the 5th of February, and



placed them for temporary safety on Grummett's Island, Macquarie Harbour.

Mr. M'Geary was an unlettered man, but one of great experience in Bush-craft and acquaintance with the Natives, whose language he spoke with much fluency. He was associated with Mr. Robinson, and once, when that gentleman was absent, he fell in with a tribe near Cape Portland. There he brought his tact to bear so well, and so convinced the Aborigines of their peril in falling in the hands of the remorseless *Red-coats*, that they agreed to go with him. Accompanied by their forty-two dogs, they followed him to Swan Island depôt.

Mr. M'Kay was, also, a very useful man in this important sphere of action. In 1830, assisted by M'Geary, he was able to capture thirteen at one time, and twelve at another. He was successful in catching four of the renowned Big River tribe. It was M'Kay who, when on one occasion attached to Mr. Robinson's Conciliatory Mission, was severely treated by some rough Blacks, that thought to complete their work by dashing his brains out with waddies. But the Bushman had secreted, against orders, certain weapons, of so unmistakable a power, that four of his antagonists were dropped, and the rest departed in haste.

Mr. Surridge, when coxswain of a boat at Waterhouse Point, to the north-east, made a fortunate capture of several Natives; and, with the help of some sailors, obtained others. In October 1830, he placed three males and two females on Gun Carriage Island. In November, with the aid of Native women, he obtained eight men and two women near the Forster's river to the north-east.

Mr. Jorgen Jorgenson must next be presented. This extraordinary man was an adventurer of no ordinary kind. Many years ago, he wrote his life for one of the Hobart Town Almanacks. A native of Denmark, and a sailor, he came over to England in early manhood. He was with the expedition that settled Hobart Town in 1804. After various vicissitudes, he came under the cognizance of the British Police Authorities. Delivering himself from their grasp, he reappeared on another scene. With a few adventurers, he landed upon the out-of-the-world isle of Iceland, made glowing speeches upon grievances of which the people had no previous



knowledge, proclaimed himself their deliverer from the thralldom of Denmark, and actually succeeded in placing himself at the head of the Government of that island of volcanic heat and glacial cold. The untimely arrival of a small vessel from Denmark suggested unpleasant remarks, and led to his speedy exit from the throne. He again visited London, again fell into old habits, again was recognized as an old offender, and, with complaints from Denmark, secured a *free* passage to Van Diemen's Land.

Yet, though simply a convict, his fertility of resources, energy of character, and absence of bashfulness, brought him into notice. A good penman, a diligent worker, a compliant servant, he attracted the attention of Mr. Anstey, and secured his favour. When, therefore, the Roving Parties were appointed, the Dane made himself so useful as a handy man of all work to the police magistrate, that he was eventually promoted to the command of a party himself. He proudly styles himself the only prisoner of the Crown entrusted with such a commission. He was allowed an extra shilling a day when out. In his acknowledgment to Mr. Anstey, August 11, 1829, he modestly says, "I hope you will do me the justice to believe that, had I any other means to supply my wants than by the bounty of Government, I would most cheerfully do so."

He set out with a determination to make himself famous, to feed his love of applause, to satisfy his ambition. He pleased Mr. Anstey, and therefore the Government, no less by the regularity and voluminous nature of his reports, than by his dashing activity. A clever, shrewd, but calculating old man, he secured the approval of a few, but earned the indifference or dislike of many. Mr. Robinson in vain endeavoured to dislodge him from the confidence of Mr. Anstey. Others stormed and threatened. He still held on in triumph. But when useful no longer, he was suffered to sink into obscurity, whither his old habits of intemperance had been gradually leading him. An article in a paper would now and then sparkle with his old fire, and amuse by its eccentricity.

After his return from his Native hunting, he prepared a record of his own experience in the Bush, detailing circumstances connected with the "Black War." This manuscript he presented to Dr. Braim, afterwards the learned and much



esteemed Archdeacon of Portland, in the colony of Victoria, and subsequently useful in a West of England Rectory, who very generously gave it to me, in order to assist me with some materials for my work on 'The Last of the Tasmanians.'

Mr. Jorgenson from the first took a correct view of the disorderly movements of the Roving Parties. These were driving the Natives hither and thither, without any settled and united plan of action. As he properly observed, when addressing his patron, Mr. Anstey, "We should never drive an enemy (unless we absolutely want to get rid of him) from the place where we know him to be, to places where we cannot easily trace him, much less from such a district as Swanport into the interior, where the Natives, if attacked or defeated, might take the selection whether they would fly to the eastward or westward." He proposed the adoption of the Fabian system, "slow and cautious;" knowing that the Government, in doing so, "must bear the taunts of disaffected squatters, and the gloomy ill-will of assigned servants." Both masters and men had been sufficiently tried by their troubles with the Aborigines, and wanted a prompt and certain cure applied.

In a well-written paper he unfolds the various causes of the want of success in the existing arrangements. He thus describes them:—

"1st. Want of a plan of combined operations.

"2d. A total absence of discipline.

"3d. Inveterate laziness, which induces the parties to proceed over the best ground they can find from one place to another; and the Natives, thus knowing their customary haunts, can easily avoid them.

"4th. That the men forming the parties have been promised indulgence at the expiration of a certain time, without the additional condition that none would be granted unless the Natives were fallen in with, captured, or otherwise disposed of.

"5th. The imposition and deceit practised by prisoner leaders, wishing to stand well, and be called good fellows by their fellow-prisoners, and thus indulge the parties in idleness, and stifle all complaints.

"6th. (But which I advance with great caution.) Black Tom and the other Blacks accompanying the expedition not



being willing to bring the parties to where the Natives would be likely to be.

“7th. The imposition practised, to screen idleness, to hold out that the Aborigines are men of superior cunning, and amazingly swift runners, whereas the facts show to the contrary.”

The enemies of Jorgenson, who admitted his facility of composition, and his ability to find fault with others, pointed triumphantly to the meagre results of such lofty talk and great promise of achievements. He could reprove others for their absurd methods, but failed in catching the Blacks himself.

The last native family known to be out, consisting of an old man and an old woman, three elder children, and a little boy,—the last of his race,—were captured near the Arthur River, on the north-west coast. A reward of 50*l.* had been offered for their persons. The Native female companion of a leader accomplished the feat by artfully representing to the affrighted creatures that she could conduct them to fine hunting-grounds, where no Whites could molest them. Once in the boat, and tossed on the western waters, they became helplessly sea-sick, and, in that condition, were taken to a British establishment at Woolnorth, near Cape Grim.

The Hobart Town Aboriginal Committee, who had never wholly approved of the Roving Parties, and had believed the too frequent charges brought against them of shooting the Natives, took action in recommending their withdrawal from the field. On February 2nd, 1830, even, they wrote to the Governor that “they were unanimously of opinion that martial law should be suspended during the period of Mr. Robinson’s Peaceful Mission; and they are further of opinion that more missions of a similar nature could be employed with advantage, provided proper persons can be employed to take charge of the parties.” They suggested the propriety of calling in the Roving Parties till the success of Mr. Robinson be known. Though that was not done, and the said parties continued to be usefully engaged some time longer, they all gradually withdrew as Robinson advanced, as the bright stars retire before the rising sun, and left the crowning work and crowning glory to that distinguished leader.



## ROBINSON THE CONCILIATOR.

The hero of the hour was George Augustus Robinson. He was of no high lineage. He was no worshipper of chivalry. He inherited no special enthusiasm. He had no direct training for a Mission. He was but a plain man, of very moderate education, with no elevating surroundings. He was a Hobart Town bricklayer.

This was the man who undertook to bring peace to a sorely troubled colony. He believed in his power to do so. He was more than the thousands of soldiers and constables, stronger than the law, with greater influence than the Governor. His promises were derided, and his offers of service were neglected. Could any good come out of Nazareth? When official wisdom failed, and military prowess was vainly employed, could a simple bricklayer hope to succeed?

How came the man to be so confident? He felt he had the needful qualifications. What were these? Sincere conviction, hearty sympathy, active benevolence, sound common sense, healthy body, unquailing courage, and resolute will.

True heroes are only developed by circumstances; but they must be inspired by high purpose. In all climes they have perhaps ever been, whether successful or not, suppliants of heaven. From this highest source had George Robinson obtained his inspiration. He sought it in Divine contemplation, and found it. Pitying the dark islander, he laid the case of the sorrower before the Father, and thence came his strong convictions, and his surest hopes.

He was not a mere sentimentalist. Over the tale of aboriginal wrongs he by no means shed the abundant tears flowing from some novel-reader over the distress of maiden all forlorn. His sighs were from no fanciful idea of suffering. He groaned in spirit as he dwelt upon Bush horrors, but his brow was knit, and his hand was clenched. He was not satisfied with grieving over wrong, but his soul was moved to redress the evil done, to avert still threatened woe. With no morbid thought, his project was as sound as his reasoning was healthy.

If not scholarly, he had his faculties about him, ready for



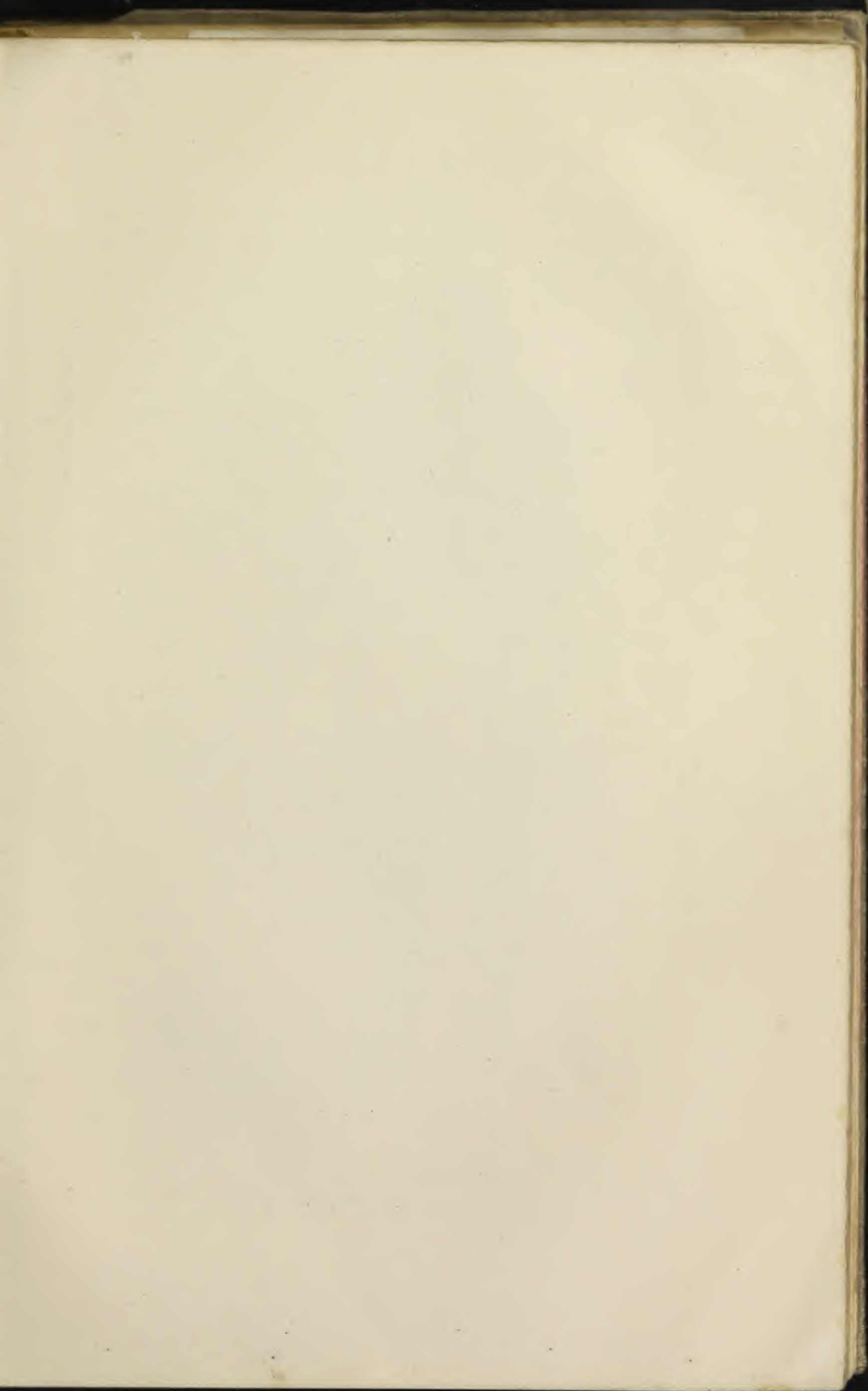
prompt and direct employment. His social sphere was limited, but it was sufficient for his purpose. He did not, like many a man, regret want of favourable circumstances, nor pant after unattainable conditions. All who seek usefulness in life must be content with the openings before them. The will to do must be exercised upon the scene without, however poor the prospect, or barren the field. No true man asks the removal of every stone of obstruction before his march. Great deeds follow deep feeling, and unselfish preparations for the conflict.

His plan was well thought out, and matured, yet few to whom he unfolded it believed in its practicability. Good men and women wished it might succeed, yet shook their heads in doubt. One far-seeing man, at least, accepted the bricklayer's views. A man of the world, a stern, military disciplinarian, a controller of the roughest elements of convictism, a contender with armed bushrangers, one not easily swayed by smooth humanitarianism, was Lieutenant Gunn, the giant superintendent of the Hobart Town Penitentiary. This gentleman assured the writer that he always had faith in the man and his views.

George Robinson had to wait. The utter failure of all other projects could alone make way for him. He then went on his own humble but useful career. Any possible chance of blessing an unfortunate Black was eagerly embraced. In his leisure he visited the sick and fallen. The caged prisoners were objects of his Christian zeal. The sailors and whalers he met on the strand as Secretary for the first Bethel Mission of Hobart. An ardent Wesleyan, he sought the conversion of sinners from the paths of sin. If tender, he was confident; if gentle, he was resolute. In Sunday School or on highway, he taught, he pleaded, he prayed, and he preached. In the Rev. William Bedford, the Chaplain, he had a firm friend; and it was through him mainly that the Governor was induced to try the plan of conciliation.

There was nothing of the gloomy ascetic about him. His bold, bright eye, glowing cheeks, open countenance, broad forehead, strong nasal organ, and full lips, displayed healthy vigour and straightforwardness. A firm, decided step marked his decision and self-reliance. One who knew him well told me that his whole bearing seemed to say "that he would









MANALAGANA.

(From MR. DUTERREAU'S portrait.)



knock down St. Paul's to carry his object." Strongly framed, and of middle stature, he was fit to encounter Bush hardships.

It was toward the end of 1841 that I became acquainted with the Hobart Town artist, Mr. Duterrau. My introducer was one of the noblest and most constant lovers of the Dark race—Hottentot, Kaffir, Australian, or Tasmanian. This was George Washington Walker, the companion missionary—visitor to the south with James Backhouse of York. Members of the Society of Friends, their sympathies were naturally drawn out towards Aborigines. "I will take thee," said the good man to me, "to one who pities the unhappy Natives, and honours their white friend."

In the studio one day of 1841 I was introduced, for the first time, to the heroes and heroines of the celebrated *Black War of Van Diemen's Land*. Mr. Duterrau had a portrait of the Nestor of Tasmanians, the thoughtful Manalagana, whose magnificent and powerful head reminded one of a Hercules or a Jove. There was Wooreddy, a chieftain of the day, with the *physique* of an athlete. Among the female forms, the most prominent was that of the lively little Tasmanian belle, Truganina or Lalla Rookh, long afterwards my greeting friend at Oyster Cove.

The venerable artist directed my attention to the figure of an Englishman. "There," cried he; "there is a real hero, though not one of your world's herces." It was none other than George Robinson.

Seated in that studio, I listened with rapt attention to the story of Tasmanian wrongs. The aged narrator shed tears over the fate of his black friends, and strongly excited my sympathetic impulses. "I can but set forth the story on canvas," he said; "would that some one could tell the sad tale in a book."

The remembrance of that glowing face, angelic in its display of brotherhood feeling, is fresh before me, though forty odd years have passed since his benevolent smile beamed upon me. Then and there it was that I resolved to gather all the information I could from actors in the dark scenes, that I might some day "tell the sad tale in a book."

The *Conciliator*, as George Robinson was beautifully styled by the artist, was thus made known to me.

His ideas about the Blacks were gained by actual contact,



by practical knowledge. Quick to recognize where they had a friend, the poor creatures hung about his workshop and home. With them he shared his slender store. Wife and children took the like kind interest in them. It was little they could give but gentle words, genial smiles, and pious counsel. Passing the humble tenement, I used often to picture the scene of the worthy bricklayer surrounded by his chattering sable friends, before those terrible times of conflict burst forth, when bitter, unrelenting war scattered the tribes as autumn leaves in storm, and the pleasant reunions at the bricklayer's house were never known again.

It was in March, 1829, that he read the following in the *Hobart Town Gazette* :—

“In furtherance of the Lieutenant-Governor's anxious desire to ameliorate the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of this territory, His Excellency will allow a salary of 50*l.* per annum, together with rations, to a steady man of good character, that can be well recommended, who will take an interest in effecting an intercourse with this unfortunate race, to reside on Bruni Island, taking charge of the provisions supplied for the use of the Natives at that place.”

Here is the opportunity :—to be with the Blacks, to help them, to work for their good. But the prospect was not very favourable. It was no liberal offer. A pound a week, and a ration of food. He could make more than that at his trade. He did not seek great returns for his usefulness, but it was necessary that he should live. Besides, he was a married man. He had a wife to consider ; his children must not be sacrificed to his public spirit. The man, in a subsequent review of this period, said :—“There were many powerful reasons against my entering upon such an enterprise. I had a wife and several children dependent on me. But my mind was under an impression which I could not resist. I reasoned the matter over with Mrs. Robinson, and with difficulty obtained her consent.”

On the 16th of March, 1829, he penned the following application :—

“Feeling a strong desire to devote myself to the above cause, and believing the plan which your Excellency has devised to be the only one whereby this unfortunate race can be ameliorated ; that as the Hottentot has been raised in the



scale of Being, and the inhabitants of the Society Islands are made an industrious and intelligent race, so likewise, by the same exertions, may the inhabitants of this territory be instructed. With these impressions, I beg to offer myself for the situation. I would beg leave to submit to your Excellency that a salary of fifty pounds per annum is not sufficient for the support of my family—would therefore request that you would be pleased to make such additions to the salary as you may think meet. Should my offer be accepted, I do not wish the superfluities, I only desire to be able to procure the necessaries, of life. I wish to devote myself to this people."

He was accepted, but at 100*l.* salary.

Bruni Island, so called from Admirable Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, lies between the Channel and Storm Bay, and extends to the south-westward for fifty miles. South Bruni, in which Cook's Adventure Bay is situated, is united to North Bruni by a low, narrow neck of land, and was uninhabited at the time of our story. Upon the northern portion were then the salt works of Mr. Roberts, and a few farms. The rocky coast exposed to the southern ocean is much torn and battered by the ever-boiling billows, and is carefully shunned by the mariner. Even upon the inner side, the access is often difficult from the frequent and sudden storms which rush up the Channel. A fantastic pile of lofty cliffs of basalt has been cut off from the island by the surging sea, and now stands, as the southern Bruni bulwarks, to receive the onset of the Antarctic currents, and break their crests. The whole island, from its deep indentations, exhibits the mark of such violent and long-sustained oceanic assaults, that it seems but to require a few charges more to destroy its unity of structure, and to reduce it to some straggling islets in a seething sea.

In a little cove, on the western and inner side of Bruni, and two miles from the northernmost point called by the French Expedition *Cap de la Sortie*, the Black station had to be formed.

Thirty years of suffering had passed away when I last looked into that place of settlement. The avenger and his victim had alike disappeared. The neophyte of civilization and the red-handed savage slept beneath the fallen leaves of



the forest. I turned my gaze from the bay to the opposite side of the channel. There, at Oyster Cove, at the distance of two or three miles from the scene of the first Black settlement, stood before me the rude homes of the last feeble few of the race! There is something of a peculiar melancholy interest in the reflection, that the remnant of the Tasmanian tribes should expire within sight of the Bruni depôt of their day of strength and independence.

Rations of bread and potatoes were served out to any Natives who could be induced to reside at the Station. These rations were poor in quality and deficient in quantity. The biscuits were the refuse of supplies, and the few potatoes a day would be but a miserable substitute for the plentiful and varied meal which the forest and sea provided for free rangers. It was no wonder, then, that the Blacks induced to settle at Bruni, for protection and civilization, sickened of their asylum, and repeatedly escaped to the mainland. Sickness soon set in, and poor Robinson vainly attempted to afford relief. He shared his own personal rations with the poor creatures, urgently wrote for more support, and asked for a small amount of tobacco for those who had acquired the civilized art of smoking. Some tea and sugar were ordered, but the tobacco was prohibited as a luxury. The sickness increased. Wooredy lost his first wife and child, another leading man and his two wives died, and a sad story is told of an infant being found suckling at the breast of its dead mother. The cry was, "No good—this bad place—no egg—no kangaroo—no like—all die."

But a severe trial followed. The Blacks were to be civilized, and rendered fit instruments to benefit their wilder countrymen; yet they were placed on Bruni in close proximity to some of the worst characters of the colony. Mr. Robinson had repeated complaints from the women of cruel assaults by convict wood-cutters on the island, and he observed with indignation the effects of intercourse with the whalers. At that time the black whale came about the southern coast, and into the Storm Bay, and several permanent whaling establishments existed on Bruni and the mouth of the Channel. A rough class of men, with full rations of beef, spirits, and tobacco, they found ready means of attracting the presence of the females from the Black settlement.



The locality of the depôt did not furnish sufficient means for the isolation of his charge, and the Superintendent represented the necessity of removal to Barnes Bay, and, as he stated in his official letter, "care should be taken that they have no correspondence with the white *heathen*."

The evil continued. The *gins* left the depôt for the favourite company of the sailors, and introduced contention and disease into the Native camp. Mild expostulations and angry denunciations were alike of no service, and Robinson wrote almost despairingly about the moral pestilence.

But the storm of war was rising. Outrages and cruelties increased on the Bruni island. The Whites became more infuriated, and the Blacks more determined. The latter saw no hope, and resolved to die spear in hand. With another people, this would be considered heroic. We readily agree with Dr. Johnson, that a man's patriotism must be quickened at the sight of the plains of Marathon. We can all sympathize with some struggles for freedom. But when our own colonists are brought into collision with the races whose lands they have seized without compensation or inquiry, the feeling is otherwise; the heroism of the foe is lost in the mist of our selfishness. The resolution, therefore, of the Tasmanians to make no peace with the possessors of their hunting-grounds excited the indignation and displeasure of the colony. It was then that Mr. Robinson, sick of his miserable failure on Bruni, and conscious of his power to do something more effective for the Natives, proposed going after the marauders of the wilds with a mission of mercy. The Aborigines Protection Committee seconded his suggestions, and the Government sanctioned his object.

Let us hear an exposition of the system of his *Conciliatory Mission* from the reflection of its author, when a septuagenarian. "I considered," he said, "that the Natives of Van Diemen's Land were rational; and although they might, in their savage notions, oppose violent measures for their subjugation, yet if I could but get them to listen to reason, and persuade them that the Europeans wished only to better their condition, they might become civilized, and rendered useful members of society instead of the bloodthirsty, ferocious beings they were represented to be. This was the principle upon which I formed my plan."

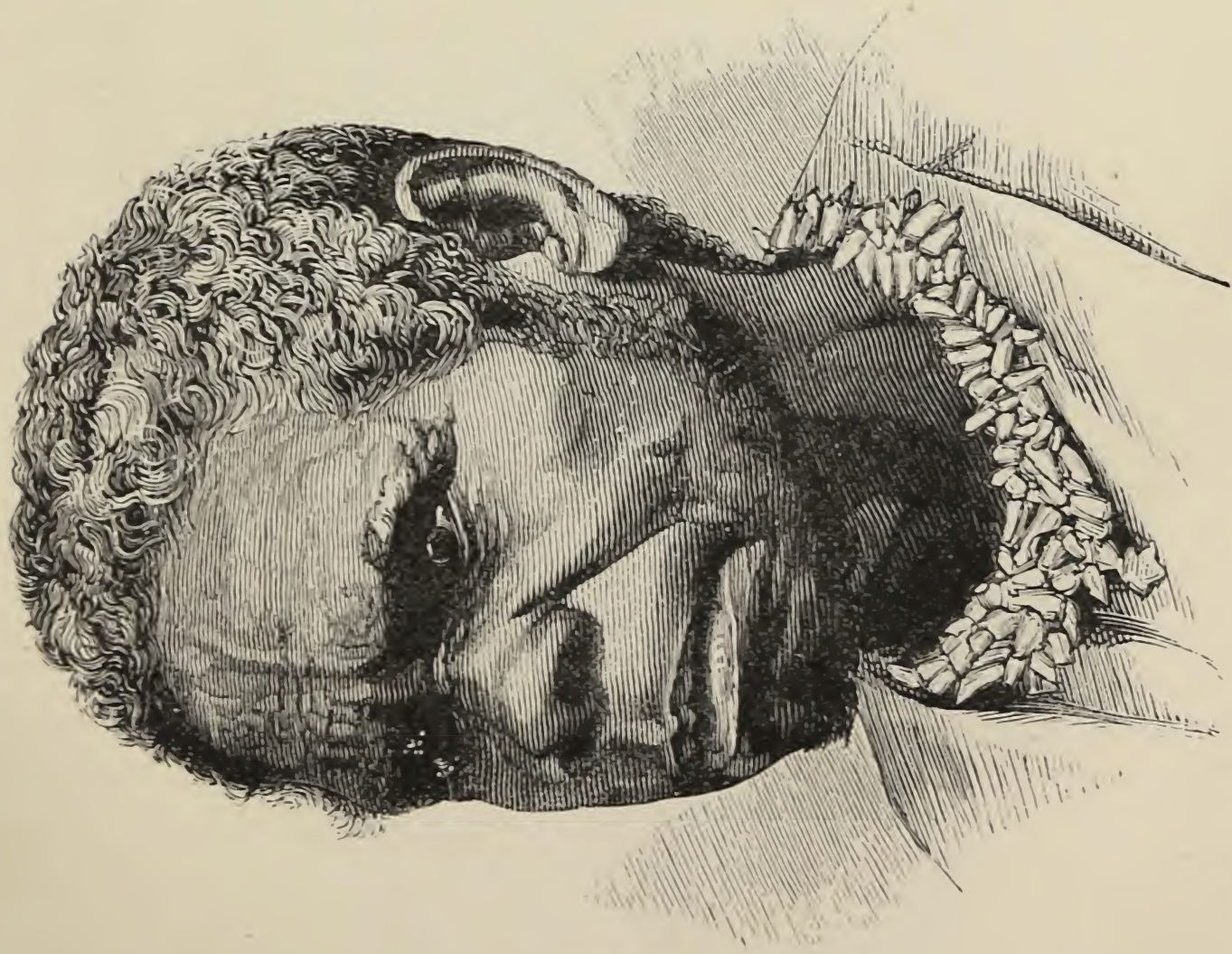


Now for the coadjutors—the means of working out the project. A dozen Natives had been captured by Mr. Gilbert Robertson, and others, and lodged for safety in the Richmond gaol. It was arranged to forward four of these to Robinson, though the latter relied more upon his Bruni friends. The following were at first appointed to act as interpreters of his party: Black Tom, Pegale, Joseph, Doctor, and Maclean, a white man. Eumarrah, with Manalagana and wife, were afterwards with him. But the one upon whom he most relied, and who proved a faithful and efficient ally throughout his subsequent Bush career, was the youthful Truganina (spelt by Mr. Duterrau, Truggernana). This was the Beauty of Bruni, and one of the romances of Tasmanian story.

When I saw her, thirty years after her wonderful career with Mr. Robinson, I understood the stories told of her vivacity and intelligence. Her eyes were still beautiful, and full of mischievous fun. Thirty years before, she would have been captivating to men of her colour, and not by any means an uninteresting object to those of whiter skins. Her mind was of no ordinary kind. Fertile in expedient, sagacious in council, courageous in difficulty, she had the fascination of the serpent, the intrepidity of the royal ruler of the desert. Would that we could say that her purity of morals equalled the brilliancy of her thoughts, and that her love of virtue were akin to her love of adventure! She was but a savage maiden trained in the wilderness. A lady described to me her appearance in 1832. She declared her exquisitely formed, with small and beautifully-rounded breasts. The little dress she wore was thrown loosely around her person, but always with a grace, and a coquettish love of display. The *Courier* of Hobart Town notices one characteristic in her portrait by Mr. Duterrau: "She is the very picture of good-humour."

She was a wife, though never a mother. Certainly, her older and more sober husband had no little anxiety with his fickle partner, and no small difficulty in restraining her erratic tendencies. We know not why she, who was ever so inconstant of purpose, should have so perseveringly followed the Mission, and why she, who was a woman of the forest, should have devoted years of her life in fatiguing and perilous





LALLA ROOKH, OR TRUGANINA, THE LAST TASMANIAN WOMAN.

(Photographed by MR. WOOLLEY.)



LALLA ROOKH, OR TRUGANINA.

(Photographed by MR. WOOLLEY.)







journeys to entrap and secure her countrymen. Some have thought vanity was her leading passion, and that the desire of distinction among Whites and Blacks induced her to become the prominent guide and interpreter. Without doubt she was personally attached to Mr. Robinson, and strove earnestly to serve him. It was for this purpose that she studied to acquire other dialects, so as to hold intercourse with the wilder tribes of the interior. Although her husband, Wooreddy (or "the Doctor"), consented to be one of the Conciliator's party, there is a story told that shortly after the departure of the Mission, in January 1830, as Mr. Robinson was sleeping near a large cave, the excited husband arose in the night, took a weapon in his hand, and would have murdered our white friend, from jealousy of his influence over Truganina, had not his intention been discovered in time. And yet Wooreddy continued to accompany him. "He was present," says Mr. Duterrau, "at all Mr. Robinson's interviews with the Blacks. Through the intervention of this man, Mr. Robinson has been preserved from extreme danger when his life was about to be taken from him."

Manalagana (or, Limina Bungana), "as a warrior," said Mr. Duterrau, "stood unrivalled amongst the Aborigines, and was considered a sage by his tribe." The artist, who was a devoted friend to Mr. Robinson, goes on to observe:—"Such was the commanding influence Mr. Robinson possessed over these singular people, that, at the first interview, Manalagana left his native wilds, and accompanied Mr. Robinson on all his missionary enterprises throughout the island, to whom he continued faithfully attached to the conclusion of his service in 1835." Manalagana then removed to Flinders Island, whither all the captured were taken, and died in March of the following year, 1836.

Of his wife, Mr. Duterrau has these words of commendation:—"This woman laboured incessantly to promote the objects of the Mission. Tanleboueyer and her sister were originally stolen from their country by the sealers, when children, and held in bondage until emancipated by Mr. Robinson (in 1830). She was superior to the other Natives both in person and intelligence, and possessed much dignity of manners, seldom participating in those frivolities the others indulged in. She was exceedingly attached to her husband,



The feeling was mutual, for during the period of six years they were with Mr. Robinson they never quarrelled."

The start was not an auspicious one. A boat had been provided for the passage to Port Davey, on the south-west; but it was wrecked, with the loss of nearly all the supplies. The determination of his character would permit of no delay, nor retrograde movement; so Mr. Robinson set off with his knapsack of bread, and tramped it to the place. He had given himself to his work, and was resolved, like a good soldier, to go through the campaign he had begun. His engagement with the Government was for twelve months; but, aware of the uncertainty of life, he had required payment of one half-year's salary in advance for his wife, and the Governor's authority for some provision for his family in the event of his decease.

His mission had nearly terminated in his destruction in this first year of his course. Walloa, a female Aborigine, rose, like a Joan of Arc, amidst a nation of warriors, to deliver her people. She gathered a party together by her eloquence, urging a band to violence and war by her appeals, and by her courageous conduct in the field. Heading at last the Port Sorell tribe, she led them to the murder of Captain Thomas and others. Hearing that Mr. Robinson was in her neighbourhood, she immediately directed her force against him. Being warned of her approach, he fled in haste. For five days did the pursuit continue, when, just as all hope of escape was relinquished by the Mission, he was delivered from this tigress of the north by the unexpected arrival of M'Geary and his party. So strong a front of armed Europeans stayed the expected assault, and the dark Semiramis retired northward again.

It was during the last quarter of 1830 that the great campaign called "The Line" took place, which absorbed the attention of the colony, and exercised a powerful and happy influence upon the fortunes of the Conciliatory Mission. The whole strength of the island was collected to be hurled in anger against the dreaded Blacks. That manœuvre, though not productive in immediate results, was doubtless the means of completing the success of Mr. Robinson.

In his first year he had traversed the whole of the western and northern country. At Cape Grim, to the north-west, he



had met with the distinguished Bendoadicka, his wife Narraga, and brother Peewee. Two went onward with him from the Mersey. While the *Line* was out he was in the Cape Portland District, to the north-east. It was there he heard of the splendid capture of thirteen at one time, and twelve at another, by the party of Messrs. M'Geary and M'Kay. Disappointed in his own plans, it was then that he executed the first part of his mission among the sealers. That formed the relief to his year of failures. Having authority from the Governor, he visited some of the islands in the Straits, and rescued eighteen native females from the sealers.

In 1831 His Excellency sought the trial of moral agency alone. Mr. Robinson had urged the withdrawal of the armed parties from the Bush. Some said this was to secure the whole management of the capture, and deprive the earlier leaders of the prize. Certain it is, however, that high rewards were offered to secure the aid of persons in this benevolent enterprise of unarmed intervention, without a single response. Mr. Robinson had, therefore, the problem to resolve alone. His salary was raised to 250*l.*, and a strong force organized. There were many, of course, who saw no hope in such chivalrous ventures, and derided the *sugar-plum speculation*.

As he had to forego the use of physical force, he had recourse to some stratagem. His black female guides were decorated as decoys in gaudy ribbons, to attract the eye of the Bush wanderer. Trinkets were distributed, and marvellous toys provided. An ex-Bushranger assured me that he had found red feathers, red strings, and other pretty-looking objects hung in the trees of the far interior by the adventurous party. Gooseberry, Violet, Molly, Truganina, and others, looked well in their civilized adornments, and employed their arts and smiles to secure their simple countrymen. They were the light skirmishers of the force. But that upon which stronger reliance was placed was the power of sympathy. The gathering numbers added, like a rolling snowball, to the strength of the Mission. One had a sister or brother in a neighbouring tribe, and natural affection urged the search after the lost one, to save such from the danger of the war. Or, a wild son of the tribe had longings after a wife previously captured, and so entered the fold to find a mate. A father sought a son, or a child a parent; and many



a joyous reunion was thus effected. Then, as the families formed, or sufficient numbers arrived, they were draughted off to join the free and happy neighbours already safe in the new hunting-ground.

The first conquest of 1831 was the Stony Creek tribe. Its chief, Moultehalergunah, as Mr. Robinson spells his name, had been a great White-hunter. Twenty of these were secured by Mr. Robinson, with M'Geary, M'Lean, and Platt. Limina, or Manalagana, was of service near Cape Portland. It was affecting to hear the gathering tales of trouble. One asked for a son, another for a sister, a third for a wife. One was much interested in a sister, Black Jock, who had been stolen by the sealers, and he entreated the Marmanuke, or *Father*, to go in search of her. Eumarra met Mr. Robinson in the forest, rushed towards him, and grasped his hand with warmth. He brought five men and a woman in with him. In June 1831, in his official report, Mr. Robinson was able to say that, through the efforts of his party 123 had yielded, 236 had been communicated with, 110 had returned to their hunting-grounds, and 16 had escaped after capture. He himself had become acquainted with sixteen tribes of this people.

It was toward the end of 1831 that Mr. Robinson had such remarkable success. His faithful friend, Manalagana, was with him. This noble-minded savage is always presented to us in heroic attitude, and the enthusiastic painter, Mr. Duterrau, with other admirers, were justified in their estimation of the superior intellect, courage, and benevolence of this extraordinary man. His son had been murdered by a ruthless tribe, and yet, with all the natural feelings of a father, and the human passion for revenge, he appears to have acted the Christian part of not only restraining the impetuous vengeance of his sable friends, but of co-operating in good faith and principle with Mr. Robinson to bring in the offending tribe without bloodshed, so that they might be saved from destruction. It was as much as he, the chief, could do, on several occasions, to prevent the Mission of Conciliation becoming a March of Massacre.

The Mission arrived at Lake Echo on the 18th of November. It was a strong force, consisting of Mr. Robinson, his son, a Sandwich Islander, a messenger, and twelve friendly



Aborigines. They had ascended from the valleys of Central Tasmania, and had reached the vast and irregular plateau, occupying a position somewhat similar to the Deccan of India.

The smoke of the fugitives was distinguished, rising into thin columns through the foliage, by the keen eyes of the *Friendlies*. A rush was made towards the camp-fire. But it was too late. The hunted creatures, always on the watch, with true Indian sagacity had discovered their supposed enemies, and hastily retired before being observed. Robinson urged on the pursuit. One Native only, a female, knew the country; but, alarmed at the proximity of the much-dreaded tribe, she designedly led the party astray, and a whole month was lost. On the last day of the year they came in sight of the lost prey. Here Robinson practised his Bush-craft. Sending forward some Native decoys, he and the rest *planted*, or hid, themselves in a thick scrub, most anxiously awaiting the result of the negotiation. The rest may be better described in his own words:—

“In less than half an hour afterwards I heard their war-whoop, by which I knew that they were then advancing upon me. I also heard them rattle their spears as they drew nearer. At this moment Manalagana leaped on his feet in great alarm, saying the Natives were coming to spear us. He urged me to run away. Finding that I would not do so, he immediately took up his spears and kangaroo rug, and walked away. Some of the other Natives were about to follow his example, but I prevailed upon them to stop. From their advancing with the war-whoop, the Aborigines as well as ourselves considered that they were approaching us with hostile intentions, and that they had either killed the Natives who had been sent from us, or that those Natives had joined the hostile tribes. As they drew nigh, I did not observe my people amongst them. The hostile Natives being a large body, I was rather anxious as to the result. It was not until they approached very near that I saw my own people with them. They continued coming up in the same warlike attitude. I then went up to the chiefs and shook hands with them. Having explained to them in the aboriginal dialect the purport of my visit amongst them, I invited them to sit down, gave them some refreshment, and selected a few trinkets as presents, which they received with much delight. They



evinced considerable astonishment at hearing me address them in their own tongue, and from henceforth placed themselves entirely under my control. The men were accompanied by the women; and, after taking their refreshment, I returned with them to their own encampment, where the evening was spent in mutual good-humour, each party dancing alternately."

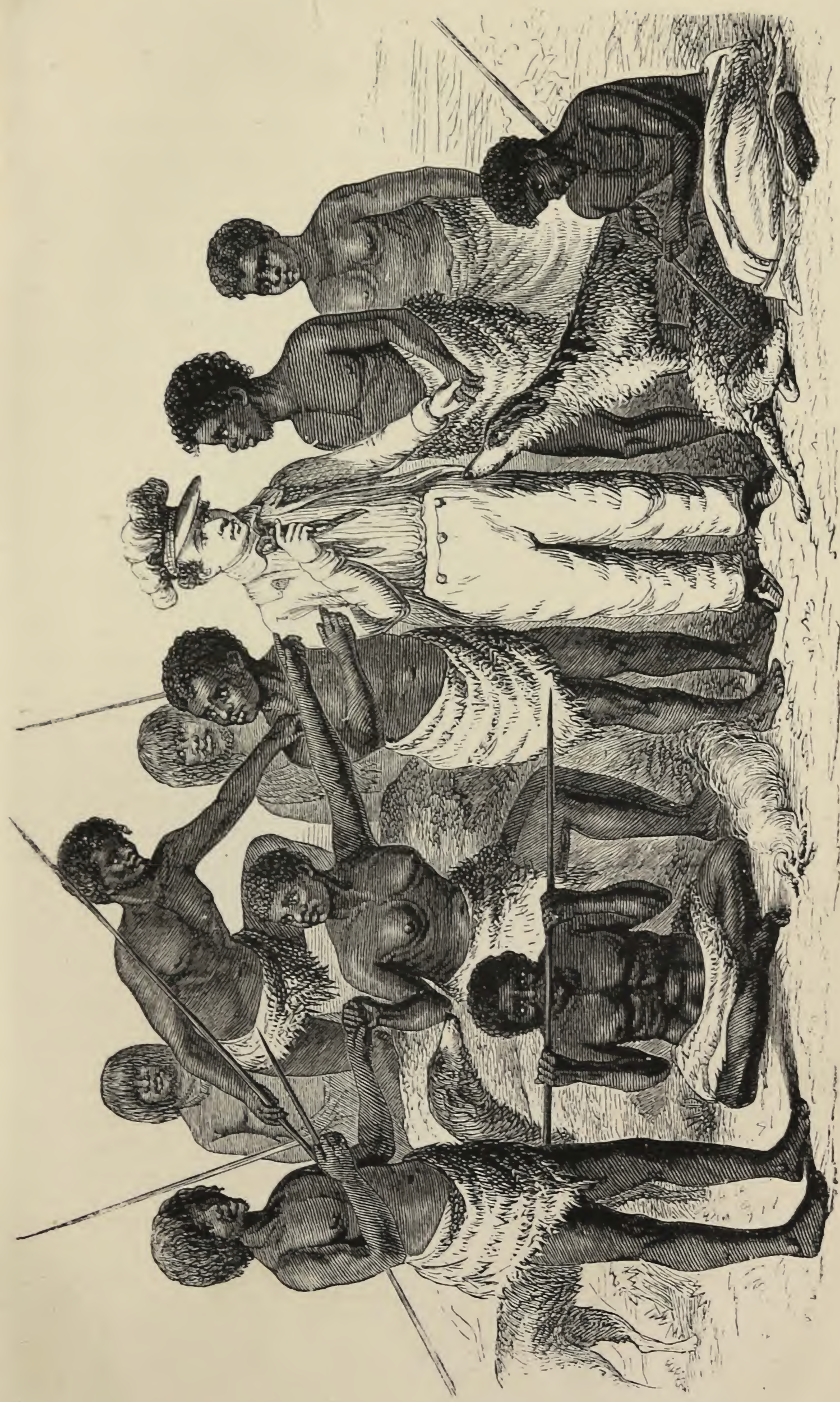
Thus terminated most satisfactorily this day of anxiety. The dangerous people were secured.

The capture of the Big River, or Ouse River tribe, was by far the grandest feature of the war, and the crowning glory of Mr. Robinson's efforts. Having learned the story from various sources, I would attempt a description of this bloodless victory.

The leader had ventured westward under the shadow of the Frenchman's Cap, whose grim cone rose five thousand feet in the uninhabited western interior. There, at last, appeared the tribe of which they were in search. It was a terrible hour,—one in which a man lives years in minutes. That tribe was the terror of the colony, the "Black Douglas" of Bush households. Confident in their strength, the Natives stayed for the approach of the strangers. Mr. Robinson was accompanied by his brave stripling of a son, by M'Geary, Stanfield, and a Hawaiian Islander. Manalagana and Truganina were there. The stout-looking but handsome Montpelata, the chieftain, glared at them. He grasped a spear eighteen feet in length. Fifteen powerful men, with three spears and a waddy each, filled with all the hate and loathing for white men which such a war had excited, were ill-restrained by the voice and gesture of their head. They rattled their spears, shouted their battle-cry, and menaced the Mission party. The women kept to the rear, each carrying on her back a fresh supply of weapons. One hundred and fifty dogs growled defiance at the intruders.

It was a moment of trial to the stoutest nerves. The Whites trembled. The friendly Blacks, half palsied with fear, would all have fled but for the self-possession of their commander. They were, as it were, beneath the dreaded eye of the storm, around whose treacherous calm the wild cyclone was dancing in fury. A word from that stern chief, and every man would be transfixed with spears. "I think





MR. ROBINSON ON HIS CONCILIATION MISSION

(From Mr. DUTERREAU'S great picture.)







we shall soon be in the resurrection," whispered M'Geary, a veteran in Native-hunting. "I think we shall," rejoined Mr. Robinson.

They came into the presence of the tribe, and stood still. The chief advanced toward them, some sixty yards in front of his tribe. He saw the friendly Natives quivering with alarm, and the Europeans firmly standing, though apparently without arms. "Who are you?" shouted Montpeliata. "We are gentlemen," was the response. "Where are your guns?" was the next question. "We have none," said the leader. Still suspicious, though astonished, the dark warrior cried out, "Where your piccaninny?"—alluding to pistols, or little guns. "We have none," was again the reply.

There was another pause. Their fate was not yet decided. The male guides were much alarmed. Bungena fairly ran over the hill. Then came the first gleam of hope. The chief called after him, and told him to come back, for he would not hurt him. Meanwhile, some of the courageous female guides had glided round, and were holding quiet, earnest converse with their wilder sisters. Another few minutes of irresolution, and then Montpeliata walked slowly to the rear to confer with the old women—the real arbiters of war. The men pointed their spears in watchful guard; but the yelping curs were called off. With admirable discipline, the brutes retired, and were instantly quiet.

As the fallen gladiator in the arena looks for the signal of life or death from the president of the amphitheatre, so waited our friends in anxious suspense while the conference continued. In a few minutes, before a word was uttered, the women of the tribes threw up their arms three times. This was the inviolable sign of peace. Down fell the spears. Forward, with a heavy sigh of relief, and upward glance of gratitude, came the friends of peace. The impulsive Natives rushed forth with tears and cries, as each saw in the other's rank a loved one of the past. Eumarra recognized his two brothers in the tribe, and his wife embraced three other relatives. The chief of Bruni grasped the hand of his brother Montpeliata.

It was a jubilee of joy. A festival followed. And, while tears flowed at the recital of woe, a corrobory of pleasant laughter closed the eventful day.



When this desperate tribe was captured, there was much surprise and some chagrin to find that the 30,000*l.* had been spent, and the whole population of the colony placed under arms, in contention with an opposing force of sixteen men with wooden spears! Yet such was the fact. The celebrated Big River or Ouse Mob, that had been raised by European fears to a host, consisted of sixteen men, nine women and one child. With a knowledge of the mischief done by these few, their wonderful marches and their wide-spread aggressions, their enemies cannot deny to them the attributes of courage and military tact. A Wallace might harass a large army with a small and determined band; but the contending parties were at least equal in arms and civilization. The Zulus who fought us in Africa, the Maories in New Zealand, the Arabs in the Soudan, were far better provided with weapons, more advanced in the science of war, and considerably more numerous, than the naked Tasmanians. Governor Arthur rightly termed them a noble race.

Though they thus submitted to moral force, it was because they felt their work was done. They had fought for the soil, and were vanquished. They had lost fathers, brothers, sons, in war. Their mothers, wives, and daughters, harassed by continued alarms, worn by perpetual marches, enfeebled by want and disease, had sunk down one by one to die in the forest, leaving but a miserable remnant. Their children had been sacrificed to the cruel exactions of patriotism, and had perished of cold, hunger, and fatigue, or had been murdered by parental hands, as the Roman maiden of old, to prevent a supposed worse fate.

Dr. Story told me that the *Line* movement "struck them with such surprise, and displayed the powers that could be brought to bear against them, that G. A. Robinson had less difficulty in persuading them to accompany him where they would not be molested by the Whites, and have 'plenty damper, sugar, blanket.' When he landed on the north-east corner of the island, he with his tame Blacks followed the wild ones for some days before they would return with him to his boat. They had been terrified by the *Line*, saying it was 'pop, pop, pop, all pop.' 'If,' he said, 'you go there, you get killed. Come with me—you get plenty damper. I don't want you to come with me, but you get killed, if you



go there.' And thus he worked upon them; some going with him, others followed after a time."

The Hon. J. H. Wedge, when writing to me of the *Line*, added, "Notwithstanding the want of success attending the expedition, I am impressed with the belief that it had a considerable moral effect upon the minds of the Natives, and disposed them to lend a more willing ear to Mr. Robinson's propositions, when he succeeded in gaining an interview with them."

Mr. Robinson's own way is curiously expressed in his letter of December 14th, 1830:—"The grand object is in getting to them, for until this is accomplished, speaking to them is out of the question. There is not a nation or people with whom I have conferred, but what have fled at my approach, as clouds before the tempest, yet I have never left them, until I have eventually succeeded in effecting an intercourse with them."

This letter is in his own handwriting; it has its own peculiar orthography and punctuation.

The tribe had yielded as friends, not prisoners. It is true that they laid down their spears, and brought forth from hidden places sixteen stand of arms, which they had taken in the war; but the captors had prudently as well as generously returned their spears, so needful for hunting purposes. At any easy rate the mixed parties proceeded toward the settlement of Bothwell, situated to the westward of the main line from Hobart Town to Launceston. They arrived there, to the great alarm of the inhabitants, on the 5th of January, Mr. Robinson guaranteeing the peaceable behaviour of his wild charge. When visiting the little township in 1842, I was shown the site of the encampment, and I heard the tale of unnecessary fears.

On the road thither the Conciliator conversed with his sable companions, and heard many sad stories of the sufferings of the tribes, and vehement denunciations of the cruelties of the Europeans. They showed him their wounds. They all, "men, women, and child," he said, "had dreadful scars." He went to the Bothwell Inn, and had the unwonted luxury of a bed, with no apprehension of the tribe leaving him in the night.

From Bothwell he addressed this letter to head-quarters,



on January 5th, 1832 :—" On the 31st ultimo, I succeeded in effecting a friendly communication with these sanguinary tribes. Their whole number was twenty-six, viz. sixteen men, nine women, and one child, including the celebrated chief Montpeilliatter of the Big River tribe. I fell in with these people thirty miles N.W. of the Peak of Teneriffe."

On they came in their confiding trust, though much to the terror as well as curiosity of the settlers. Mr. Robinson was greeted indeed with a triumphal entry. His own house was at the head of the town, and his wife and children were spectators of his glory. He came with prisoners, but no victims. He ended a war, and presented voluntary captives. The whole population assembled to witness the procession. First came the worthy victor, with his white companions. Then were seen his own fourteen faithful native followers, and the twenty-six wilder people of the woods, the men with spears in hand. Shouts of welcome greeted all. The estimable Governor was deeply moved, and waited at Government House to receive and entertain his guests. The tender eyes of women were swimming with tears as the dark race passed on, and kind looks and smiles fell gently upon the war-tossed ones. Presents came before the Governor's feast; lollies or sweetmeats, toys, pictures, dresses were showered upon them.

Two specimens of Colonial poetic fire appeared to commemorate so auspicious an event. One, by Hobartia, was published in the *Hobart Town Magazine*, for 1834. It commenced :—

"They came, sad remnant of a bygone race,  
Surviving mourners of a nation dead;  
Proscribed inheritors of rights which trace  
Their claims coeval with the world! They tread  
Upon their nation's tomb!

\* \* \* \*

"They came like straggling leaves together blown,  
The last memorial of the foliage past;  
The living bough upon the tree o'erthrown,  
When branch and trunk lie dead."

The next is called 'Lines written on the recent Visit of the Aborigines to Hobart Town : '—

"They are come in their pride, but no helmet is gleaming  
On the dark-brow'd race of their native land;  
No lances are glittering, nor bright banners streaming,  
O'er the warriors brave of that gallant band.



“They are come in their pride, but no war-cry is sounding,  
With its woe-fraught note, over hill and plain ;  
For the hearts of those dark ones with gladness are bounding,  
And bright songs of peace breathe loud in their strain.

“They are come—they are come, and a boon they’re imploring,  
Oh ! turn not away from their soul-felt prayer,  
But to high hopes of Heaven this lost race restoring,  
For yourselves gain mercy and pardon there.”

Colonel Arthur pleased them with his courtesy. Anxious to afford them additional gratification, he ordered the band out. But the effect was different from that which he expected. The poor creatures screamed with terror, and crowded round Mr. Robinson with entreaties for protection. It was long before their fears subsided, when they would cautiously approach the drums and touch them, as if to test the power of the noisy animal.

Then a grand demonstration took place. During the festival their confidence increased, and they were induced to show forth their strength and skill, after being personally decorated with ribbons by the Governor. Ondia put a crayfish on a spear, and at a distance of sixty yards brought it down with another spear. Thus hours passed in the Governor’s garden, which was thrown open to all comers on the occasion. That evening Mr. Robinson took them to his own home, and they camped about his premises.

It was on this occasion that portraits were taken of the Aborigines by Mr. Duterrau. My late esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Napier, J.P., of Essendon, Victoria, then took sketches of some of the people, and copies of which paintings I have secured by the brush of the late Mr. Thomas Clark, the Melbourne artist.

A few days afterwards a vessel was prepared, and the Natives were induced to go on board, in order to reach splendid hunting-grounds, where no soldiers and parties were to be found, and where they would never be molested. On their way to the Straits they suffered much from sea-sickness. The captain of the vessel assured me that it was pitiable to witness their distress. Their moaning was sad indeed. They appeared to feel themselves forsaken and helpless, and abandoned themselves to despair.

The children, with few exceptions, were not suffered to go



to the prospective settlement, but were placed in what was known as the Orphan School, near Hobart Town. This establishment was for the care and education of neglected and orphan children of convicts. The building is of great extent, the grounds are spacious, and the arrangements generally are suitable for the object. Hundreds of children, from helpless infancy to the age of fourteen, are there provided with board and education. It is over forty years ago since I had the pleasure of seeing there the dark offspring of the warriors of the Black War. Most of them struck me as being sickly and depressed, and I wondered not at the terrible mortality that had thinned their numbers.

The greatest enthusiasm attended the reception of Mr. Robinson. The newspapers were loud in his praise, and the jealousy of his rivals yielded to admiration. Although his salary as Conciliator, or head of the Friendly Mission, had been previously raised to 250*l.*, and a bonus of 100*l.* bestowed, some fresh demonstration of gratitude for his efforts was demanded. He himself wrote a letter, presenting his claims. The Committee for the Protection of the Aborigines were prepared to second his memorial. A grant of four hundred pounds was made, and a promise was given of seven hundred more upon the completion of his wonderful mission.

Ever prompt in his decisions and movements, we find him off on the 11th of February for Great Island, afterwards Flinders Island, to report upon a suitable home for the captured ones. Then he struck off to the west once more, as the poor hunted creatures had by this time quite and for ever deserted the central and eastern portions of the island—the scene of the *Line* operations. At Port Davey twenty-six were saved. Several of these were found to be above six feet in height. One old man put the captor in mind of Abraham with his white beard. The tribe had never been active in the war.

More conquests of peace followed the capture at Port Davey. At Birch's Rock, sixteen were taken; at West Point, six; at Mount Cameron, five; at the Surrey Hills, four; and at Sandy Cape, thirty-seven. From the report of July 12th, 1832, we learn that thirty-two were gained in the neighbourhood of Macquarie Harbour. At one place on the west coast, where sixteen were collected, their appearance



was so wretched that they were said to resemble ourang-outangs rather than human beings. One poor old man had had his eyes shot out by some *Christian* pursuer. Mr. Robinson was much moved at this spectacle of misery.

A most formidable difficulty was experienced by Mr. Robinson on the Arthur River. This was in the inhospitable region to the north-west. A strong band of Aborigines had been brought under his notice by the friendly Blacks, and a conference had been held one evening in September 1832. In spite of the appeals of the Nestor, Manalagana, and the lucid exposition of the situation by the leader in his best Tasmanian speech, the forest men distrusted the offered conditions, and sullenly declined the advances of the Whites. A night of dreadful suspense followed. After the conference, the strangers camped at a little distance, and kept up noisy talk and rattling of spears through the hours of darkness. Our leader, conscious of the necessity of reassuring his own party, put on a calm and confident appearance, threw off some of his clothes, rolled himself in his blanket before the fire, and watchfully waited for the morn. The subsequent adventures are thus told by himself:—

“At the earliest dawn of day they made a large fire, around which the men assembled, and began preparing their weapons intended for my destruction. At this juncture, one of the wild Natives (a relative of one of my friendly Aborigines) commenced a vehement discussion, and argued against the injustice of killing me, and asked why they wanted to kill their friend and protector. I had by this time put on my raiment. My aboriginal companions were exceedingly alarmed, and, on looking for their spears, found that the wild Natives had taken them away during the night. Several of their blankets had also been stolen, and attempts had been made to tie up the dogs. In the midst of the discussion I rose up, and stood in front of them with my arms folded, thinking to divert them from their savage purpose. I said if they were not willing to go with me, they could return again to their own country. Scarcely had I spoken ere they shouted their war-whoop, seized their spears, and proceeded at once to surround me. With their left hand they grasped a bundle of spears, whilst in their right they held one. My Aborigines shrieked and fled. The Natives had nearly encircled me.



Their spears raised were poised in the air. The friendly Aborigines were gone. At this crisis, I made off. Although I saw not the slightest chance of escape, I pursued my way rapidly through some copse, winding round the acclivity of some low hills, and took a north-east direction toward an angle of the river; on approaching which I saw one of the friendly Natives who had escaped, who, with much trepidation, said that all the rest of the Natives were killed. At the same instant she descried the hostile Blacks approaching, and in much alarm begged of me to hide, while she swam the river and went to the encampment. To have attempted concealment at such a crisis would have been next to suicide. And looking up (for the river hath steep banks on either side), I saw one of the wild Natives looking for my footsteps. At this instant he turned, and I lost sight of him. I saw no chance of escape, except by crossing the river. The difficulty appeared insurmountable. I could not swim. The current was exceedingly rapid, and it required time to construct a machine. The Natives were in strict search after me, and I expected every moment to be overtaken. The raft on which I came over was nearly a mile lower down. I was persuaded the hostile Natives would be waiting to intercept me. I therefore abandoned all thoughts of crossing on this machine. I made an attempt to cross on a small spar of wood, and was precipitated into the river, and nearly carried away by the current. After repeated attempts, I succeeded, with the aid of the woman, in getting across. In 1838, at a public meeting in New South Wales, he gave full credit to Truganina for saving his life.

It is pleasant to record this acknowledgment. The man tried to get across the river by striding a log and paddling with his hands and arms, when, falling over into the water, he would have been certainly drowned, had not the courageous Native jumped into the water and rescued him. On visiting her at Oyster Cove I reminded her of the incident, when the little old woman clapped her hands, danced about, and laughed most merrily. She then gave me her version of the affair, adding most expressive and pantomimic performances to aid her in her narrative.

The sequel of this adventure was, that upon his arrival at his party's retreat, Mr. Robinson found several of his Natives



missing. In the mean time, instead of rushing across the rapid stream, the wild Blacks were content with sitting on a hill on their side of the water, and indulging in bad language. They threatened that if they caught the chief of the Conciliatory Mission they would burn his body, and make charms of his ashes to wear round their necks. The Englishman sought to mollify their wrath, again and again urging his innocence of any evil design against them. His appeals had, at least, some effect, for the soft heart of a girl was moved at his eloquence, and Kyenrope, the daughter of the chief of the Pieman's River tribe, made her way over the river, and joined the Mission. Old Wyne, her father, witnessed her flight, and denounced her folly in choicest native Billingsgate.

Still, Mr. Robinson did not feel comfortable in the vicinity of such neighbours, and made use of a *ruse* to extricate himself from the dilemma. He caused his men to make a great fire of damp wood and leaves, so as to create a vast cloud of smoke, as if signalling for assistance from some countrymen near at hand. The alarmed Aborigines beat a precipitate retreat, and left the course open to the exultant beleaguered. Though now forty miles from Cape Grim, the nearest British settlement, he hastened off to that place of refuge.

Notwithstanding Mr. Robinson was in this instance unsuccessful, we may credit him with having left some impression ; for we read in Mr. Cottrell's letter to Mr. Robinson, on January 19th, 1833 :—"On the 10th, we fell in with the tribe that attacked you at the Arthur's River. Old Wyne and Edick were with them. They remained with us all night, and agreed to accompany us to Macquarie Harbour ; but when we had marched about four miles, the following day, they disappeared amongst some scrub."

Well might the good man exclaim in after-times :—"In all my difficulties, my sole dependence was on the Omnipotent Being ; and I may truly say, I was led in the paths which I knew not, preserved in danger by His power alone. Frequently have I seen the sun go down without any expectation of beholding it again in the morning ; and I have been surrounded by savage Blacks, with their spears presented at me, and have been spared when all hope had fled." That successful Fijian Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Hunt, told a



meeting in Sydney :—" It is very easy to sit down and write, ' I don't believe the Blacks to be men ; ' much easier than to go among them, as Mr. Robinson has done, and show that they were not the brutes they are represented to be, but were susceptible of moral improvement, and fully possessed the attributes of humanity."

The work went on. More came in 1833. In October of that year, Mr. Robinson returned to Hobart Town, with his son, bringing thirty Aborigines. These were taken to Government House, royally entertained, and subsequently forwarded to the island retreat in Bass's Straits. Their friend, in his official communication, wrote :—" It cannot afterwards be said that these people were harshly treated, that they were torn from their country. No ; their removal has been for their benefit, and in almost every instance of their own free will and consent."

In 1834, we find the indefatigable man at his post. On February 28th he succeeded in capturing eight, and placing them, for temporary safety, on Hunter's Island, at the western entrance of the Strait, with the help of some sealer's boats. Three others followed on March 14th, and nine on April 12th. These twenty—seven men, five women, and eight younger persons—were then conveyed in the *Emerald* to Flinders. These were all obtained in the north-western corner of Van Diemen's Land, and were, singularly enough, the remnant of that tribe that attacked Mr. Robinson on the Arthur River, two years before. They confessed their intention was to have murdered him on that occasion.

Upon native information, Mr. Robinson wrote to the Governor that there were but two old men and their families left at large in the island. Colonel Arthur and the Colonial Secretary thought otherwise, and so it proved.

Onward, still onward, was the order of the indomitable Robinson. No one ignorant of the western country of Tasmania can form a correct idea of the travelling difficulties. While I was resident in Hobart Town, the Governor, Sir John Franklin, and his lady, undertook the western journey to Macquarie Harbour, and suffered terribly. One man, who assisted to carry her ladyship through the swamps, gave me his bitter experience of its miseries. Several were disabled for life. No wonder that but one party, escaping from



Macquarie Harbour convict settlement, arrived at the civilized region in safety. Men perished in the scrub, were lost in snow, or were devoured by their companions. This was the territory traversed by Mr. Robinson and his Black guides. All honour to his intrepidity, and their wonderful fidelity! When they had, in the depth of winter, to cross deep and rapid rivers, pass among mountains six thousand feet high, pierce dangerous thickets, and find food in a country forsaken even by birds, we can realize their hardships.

After a frightful journey by Cradle Mountain, and over the lofty plateau of Middlesex Plains, the travellers experienced unwonted misery, and the circumstances called forth the best qualities of the noble little band. Mr. Robinson wrote afterwards to Mr. Secretary Burnett some details of this passage of horrors. In that letter, of Oct. 2, 1834, he states that his Natives were very reluctant to go over the dreadful mountain passes; that "for seven successive days we continued travelling over one solid body of snow;" that "the snows were of incredible depth;" that "the Natives were frequently up to their middle in snow." But still the ill-clad, ill-fed, diseased, and wayworn men and women, including the merry little Truganina, were sustained by the cheerful voice of their unconquerable friend, and responded most nobly to his call; while their legs, as we are told, were cruelly lacerated in threading the thorny scrub, and clambering the sharp rocks.

But their labours were splendidly rewarded. The last party were caught. They were seen at the extreme Western Bluff, December 28th, 1834. There were four women, a man, three boys, with an attendance of thirty dogs. Long had they desired to come in, and join their relations taken before. They had even at times ventured within sight of an isolated hut; but the shot fired at them warned them rather to trust to the inhospitable western forest in the winter cold, than place themselves in the way of white men. Mr. Robinson thus graphically describes in his letter the scene of the meeting:—"The moment these poor creatures saw our Natives advancing, they ran forward, and embraced them in a most affecting manner. To this truly affecting scene, a most interesting conversation followed." All honour to the man who had brought such peace to these wanderers!



On the 22nd of January, 1835, the last party of eight Aborigines came into Hobart Town. The Mission was accomplished. Mr. Robinson had finished his work. In 1830 and 1831 he had brought in fifty-four; in 1832, sixty-three; in 1833, forty-two. The last two years of 1834 and 1835 saw the island swept of its original inhabitants.

Now came the question—what should be done to the man whom the nation delighted to honour? The promised cash from the Government came to hand, and a thousand acres of land fell also to his share. Public meetings were held to acknowledge his services, and raise funds for a testimonial. A good sum—said to have been some thousands—was presented to him.

For a short time only, Mr. Robinson became Commandant of Flinders Island; but his administrative abilities were inferior to his Bush lore. For his life in the island, the reader is referred to the next chapter.

A new sphere opened for him. Tasmanian settlers had crossed the Straits with their flocks, and the plains of Port Phillip were dotted with homesteads. The Native difficulty had arisen there. Cruelties on the one side, and outrages on the other, had indicated the beginning of another Black War. The Home Government, anxious to prevent a further depopulation of original inhabitants, sought by wise measures the conciliation of the dark tribes, and the safety of the colonists. Mr. Robinson received an offer of 500*l.* a year to be Protector of the Aborigines of Port Phillip. In 1838, he became a citizen of that colony. It is not within the scope of the present work to criticise the performance of his duties there. In 1853, he retired to enjoy his ease in England. Advancing age subdued the fire of his character, and in peaceful quietude he spent his declining days. He died at Prahran, Bath, on the 18th of October, 1866.

#### FLINDERS ISLAND REFUGE.

The removal of the Aborigines from the main island to one of the islands in Bass's Straits was contemplated even before the appointment of the Capture Parties. The general feeling of insecurity prompted the wish for this removal.



Chief Justice Pedder protested vigorously against the proposed scheme of transportation. He declared it an unchristian attempt to destroy the whole race; for once taken from their old haunts, he believed they would all die. Sir John Pedder, in after years, saw the fulfilment of his prophecy.

In 1826, the public mind was much excited about the question. Some were for entrapping the people, and shipping them off to the neighbouring but unsettled shores of Port Phillip. Others objected to this on two grounds; that it would be cruel to place them in the way of the barbarous tribes there, who would certainly destroy many of them, and that such a wretched, sandy, barren country would not furnish them with sufficient food. It was then proposed that they be shipped to King's Island.

KING'S ISLAND, lying half-way between the Cape Otway of Victoria and the north-west corner of Tasmania, is thirty miles in length and from twelve to fifteen in breadth. That it was not improperly called the "dread of seamen," will appear from the account of several fearful shipwrecks. The convict ship *Neva* went ashore there, and out of three hundred female prisoners but eight were saved. In 1845 the *Cataraqui* was lost on the south-west coast of the island, and only nine of four hundred and twenty-three persons survived.

The Bishop of Tasmania, whom I heard preach one of his most thrilling and eloquent discourses upon the occasion of this catastrophe, revisited King's Island several years after, and thus refers to that awful night:—"The surgeon was the first to perish; the poor, unhappy girls were tossed into the ocean as they were, unclad, unprepared; the wild, screaming death-shriek mingling with the wilder storm." The good man walked along the beach, accompanied by the sealer who had found the wreck two days after the accident. He heard him say, "Yonder I dragged on shore the bodies of eighteen poor girls; some were locked in each other's arms, others as tranquil as though asleep, others bent and twisted with the most distorted forms; and here I dug their grave and buried them." In one place he buried fifty; in another, twenty; and in a third, two hundred and forty-five bodies.

Such a place, though favourable on account of difficulty



of approach, was not suitable as a home for the Aborigines, as it was held of great importance to have them under some civilized control.

The KENT'S GROUP, named after H.M.S. *Kent*, presented some advantages at first, and were recommended by the Aborigines' Committee as early as December 1st, 1829, because of their utter isolation from the Main, and as possessing wood, water, mutton-birds, and some game. But they were exposed to terrific westerly gales, and were cold and wet.

CAPE BARREN ISLAND, south of Flinders, was suggested by the Committee, on May 26th, 1831, but was also objected to; though twenty miles long, it is a hopeless country. Clark Island, ten miles from the Main, and south of Cape Barren Island, next rose in favour, but was found by Mr. Robinson without anchorage, water, soil, or food.

MARIA ISLAND was the one most approved by Mr. Robinson. It possessed charms to alleviate the sorrows of banishment. It was a lovely spot, abounding in picturesque scenery, noble forests, undulating downs, mountain streams, and fertile valleys. The soil was known to be remarkably adapted to cultivation; and the Hobart Town philanthropists, desirous of the civilization of the scattered ones, hailed the proposition with delight. There was something in its aspect which would rather suggest the idea of an Isle of Calypso than of a St. Helena. When Tasman, the Dutchman, first beheld its wooded, hilly shores in 1642, he could think of no better appellation for that Isle of Beauty than the name of a distant charmer, Maria Van Diemen, the daughter of the Batavian Governor.

But they were not to go to Maria Island. All its attractions were admitted, but objections ruled. Though suggested by Mr. Robinson, recommended by the chaplain, and hoped for by many, the design was not carried out. Apart from the loss in relinquishing the works of the penal settlement there, it was contended that the island had no good harbour, and that its proximity to the eastern main, three miles, would render it no secure encampment, as the natives could readily cross the water and renew their distressing ravages. The Aborigines' Committee reluctantly disallowed the proposition in February 1831.



When, however, the roving parties had collected some of the unfortunate Blacks, it became imperative to find an asylum, and SWAN ISLAND was selected. This lies between Clark Island and the mainland of Cape Portland, being only three miles from the parent island. It had little in its favour, as its water was brackish, its soil most hopeless, and its size but a mile and a half in length. At any rate it would do for a depôt. Mr. Robinson placed twenty-three there on November 20th, 1830, and thirty-three more on December 13th. They were not unhealthy on this desolate granite rock. One little incident occurred there which illustrates the melancholy condition of the captives. Among them was an intelligent and faithful female who had been guide to Mr. Robinson. When the second party of Blacks arrived on the island, the earlier transports were eager to learn the fate of their friends. Among the many sad tales rehearsed by the new-comers was the intelligence of the murder by the Whites of the two brothers of the guide. It were vain to picture the harrowing sorrow of the unfortunate woman, or to describe her regret at the part she had taken with the Mission, and the indignant reproaches she cast upon the enemies of her people.

The limited area of Swan Island soon compelled the Government to find another home. VANSITTART or GUN CARRIAGE ISLAND was then talked of. The supposed resemblance of a hill there to the carriage of a gun procured it its name by the sealers. Lying half a mile on the north side of Cape Barren Island, and four miles south of Flinders, one is at a loss to know why the poor captives were to be taken to that miserable little place, which was only half a mile broad. It is nearly surrounded by dangerous rocks, and the surf rolls with tremendous fury on its granite shore.

Yet there lay an impediment in the way. Sealers had occupied the only suitable locality, and were living there with their families. In those days of despotic irresponsibility, such difficulties were but as cobwebs in the path. Mr. Robinson had authority to remove the Straitsmen; and he was not accused of refinement in his mode of executing the order. They were enjoined to leave immediately, and under no pretence to approach the island again.

Sulkily did these primeval settlers prepare for their



departure. In the mean while, the impetuous Mr. Robinson brought his black charge from Swan Island to the Great Dog, a little islet between Flinders and Gun Carriage. One cannot but sympathize with the evicted sealers. Gathering up their little property, their goats, their household stuff, their children, they put off upon the stormy ocean in their whale-boats, to seek another home. The hut, the little garden, the potato plot, the scene of so many years' labour and pleasure, were deserted, and no compensation was awarded.

The settlement was formed in April 1831, in a little bay on the western side of Gun Carriage, and Dr. Maclachlan was left in charge of the sixty people. Sergeant Wight was ordered there in June, with a small military party, to take charge of the stores, to protect the females from ill-treatment, to keep off the sealers, and to govern in the absence of Mr. Robinson.

It was not long before the utter unsuitability of the location became intelligible to all. The unfortunate creatures, having no motive for exercise—for little game ran within those narrow boundaries—used to sit day after day on the beach, casting tearful glances across the stormy sea towards the mountains of their native land. Those denizens of the thicket and the forest, with no maritime tastes, with nothing at every turn but the ever-restless, hateful waters, pined in their rocky prison. Their officers were as dissatisfied with the dungeon-like residence. Strong representations were made as to the wretchedness of the climate, and the barrenness of the ground. No means existed for the arrest of the terrible *home sickness* which was carrying off so many of the Natives. An *Old Hand* assured me that they "died in the sulks, like so many bears." This was in allusion to the Kaola, or tailless opossum, which rarely survives its capture, but mopes at its chain, refuses its food, and dies.

This was the Elysium contemplated by Hobart Town in the distance. No kangaroos were there, and the whole colony of the place would have perished for want of supplies, had not a sealer's boat, laden with potatoes, most providentially called in for shelter in a storm.

This second refuge must be abandoned, and that after so short a trial. The sealers, whose huts and crops had been



so cruelly and unnecessarily destroyed, might then return to their old quarters.

GREAT ISLAND, afterwards called FLINDERS ISLAND, was then to be selected. The island is forty miles long, and from twelve to eighteen broad. It rises boldly from the sea, and has some prominent mountain ranges.

The place chosen for the settlement was called *The Lagoons*, as to the rear of a dreary tea-tree (*Melaleuca*) scrub, nearly bordering the sandy shore, was a salt lagoon, or shallow lake. Fresh water was only to be found in the hollows of granite rock, or dug for in morasses, or in the white sea-sand.

Is it to be wondered at that the chilling aspect of the locality struck to the heart of the simple captives? Captain Bateman and others have described to me the despairing look of the people at their new home. A Government surveyor, engaged on the island at the time of the first arrivals,—the party from Gun Carriage,—informed me that when they saw from shipboard the *splendid* country which they were promised, they betrayed the greatest agitation, gazing with strained eyes at the sterile shore, uttering melancholy moans, and, with arms langing beside them, trembling with convulsive feeling. They were not reconciled even when, upon landing, they found plenty of kangaroos in the interior, as the Straits' climate followed them. They were located on the south-western side, exposed to the ever-boisterous western breeze, unsheltered by forests, and unprotected by rising ground near. The winds were violent and cold; the rain and sleet were penetrating and miserable. With their health suffering from chills, rheumatism and consumption diminished their numbers, and thus added force to their forebodings that they were taken there *to die*.

Some sheep, which had been presented to the Natives by Captain Dixon and other kind settlers, were taken to feed upon the barilla, or Salt Bush, of Green Island.

Old Sergeant Wight reigned on the island. His soldiers had been directed to put up some long huts of wattle-and-daub (branches and mud), about twenty-five feet long each, leaving an entrance at one end, and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke of their fires. The Blacks were expected to keep those clean. But the commander however fitted to



govern military men, was ill able to control the contending elements around him. Though sixty-six years of age, it was said that he possessed considerable energy, with strength of will and passions.

Difficulties beset him at the outset in the hostility of the various tribes. Certain coalitions existed; but bitter quarrels, proceeding to blows, were of daily occurrence. The Ben Lomond and Big River tribes were at an open issue. The Western would side with either, according to caprice. The Cape Grim Mob, the most remote and barbarous of all, kept completely aloof from the rest. All was in chaos. The Native women went about wholly naked. Indeed, the greatest disorder prevailed. To add to their trouble, fresh people kept landing, supplies were not flourishing, and the climate put all in bad temper.

A rebellion broke out. The old Sergeant adopted summary measures. He enlisted the services of the sealers, who mounted guard over the Natives. He seized fifteen of the most powerful, or quarrelsome, of the men, and put them upon a granite rock in the ocean, without food, water, or wood, although he had been directed to employ no restraint. Captain Bateman told me that, passing near in the *Tamar*, he descried the wretched people, and rescued them in an almost dying state; they had been exposed to rough weather, without shelter or rations, for five days. Their tale was a simple one. They declared they had been carried off that the soldiers might have no interruption in their criminal commerce with the women.

Mr. Wight's story was that he had discovered a rebellious attempt to upset his government, and to murder the Whites. He had got up a statement, certified by Robert Gamble, Joseph Mason, and John Strange, his mark, purporting to be the evidence given on the 30th of January, by no less distinguished a person than Piucommiuminer, more commonly known as *Wild Mary*. It was as follows:—

“That Broom-teer-lang-en-er was the first who proposed taking the boat away that was on Green Island, belonging to the sealers. She, also, stated that Cantityer, her husband, meant to have put a fire-stick in the thatch of the hut where the surgeon sleeps—that they intended to call at other islands, and to take the females from the sealers, as also the



boat belonging to John Smith, and to kill two half-caste children belonging to this man—to take this woman also.”

We may smile at this harmless manifestation of the great rebellion of Flinders; but it is certain that the fright did good for the Natives, for the Governor immediately despatched a suitable officer to rule them. This was Lieutenant Darling, whose brother afterwards became Governor of Victoria.

He was the first Commandant of Flinders. Attached to the 63rd Regiment, he combined the firmness and discipline of a military officer, with the intelligence and urbanity of a gentleman, and the benevolence and sympathy of a Christian. He arrived in March 1832, and immediately adopted such measures as tranquillized the minds of the excited savages, and disposed them to listen to their first lesson in civilization.

The primary difficulty was the want of water; this he relieved by digging in the Lagoon, and in the white sand of the shore. His policy, with respect to the sealers, was very decided. He ordered their absolute withdrawal from every part of the island, and put written notices on posts around the coast, warning them, under penalty, from approaching the place.

Now came the humanizing processes. The Commandant, by his kind, persuasive manner, succeeded in effecting some change in the rough habits of his charge; while, by his determined character, he kept the turbulent in check, and shielded the gentle and weak. He sought to engage the men in employment and the women in domestic cares. His solicitude about the elevation of the *gins* testified to the intelligence of his plans. In one of his earliest official communications, he said: “Good motherly women who could instruct the aboriginal women would be very useful.” The encouragement is indicated in the assertion that “the greatest part of the females are young, and are willing and anxious to learn.” Would that the counsel of this worthy young officer had been adopted! With the means at hand he greatly improved the comfort of the captured, and secured the approval of Colonel Arthur.

It was during the period of his excellent government that the two Quaker missionaries, Messrs. Backhouse and Walker, paid their interesting visit to the island. We have in their



narrative no exhibition of Rousseau sentimentality for savages, or Quixotic philanthropy, but the genuine display of simple, fervid, Christian feeling, and matter-of-fact, practical benevolence. They were certainly disposed to look upon the aboriginal side of the picture; but, by the very expression of their sympathy, they got a readier access to the hearts of the Natives, and a clearer conception of their habits and condition.

They found the settlement removed a dozen miles from the Lagoons, to a spot called Civilization Point, or Wyballenna, the *Black Man's House*, and formerly known to the sealers as Pea Jacket Point. There were twenty cottages for the Blacks; but eleven were tenantless. They were of wattle and plastered clay, well whitewashed, with roofs of coarse grass thatch. They were extended in the form of a crescent, and placed about a quarter of a mile from the encampment of the Whites. There were there forty-seven male adults, forty-eight female adults, seven boys, four girls, one male little one, and four female children under five years. They were not only protected from sealers, but from a worse foe—*Strong Drink*.

In their published narrative of their religious visit to the Cape Colony, Mauritius, and the Australian colonies, the excellent "Friends" give us a humorous account of a tea-party on the island, which affords us an insight into the moral and elevating designs of the officer. The surveyor there, Mr. Woodward, informed me that every Sunday Mr. Darling and the doctor would invite some of the Natives to dine with them. On this particular occasion, a singular compliment was paid to the benevolent travellers; for they tell us: "A large party of the Native women took tea with us at the Commandant's. They conducted themselves in a very orderly manner; and, after washing up the tea-things, put them in their places." It would have been gratifying to have been present at the party of the Government official in his regal state, the two smiling Quaker gentlemen, and the ebon fair ones. One wonders what they talked about. If among themselves, over the scandal cup, the ladies might have been traducing the character of their absent lords, showing some waddy marks upon the skull, or detailing slights to one and favours to another. But before three



such gentlemen, and in the palace of Flinders too, they must have "conducted themselves in a very orderly manner." It is not usual, however, to invite company, and then to leave them to *wash up*.

A formal Report of this visit was made to the Governor, at his request. From this a few extracts are here presented. "Little," said they, "can be said of the religious state of the establishment." The good men had little belief in the machinery of religion, and even doubted the efficacy of knowing the Catechism and prayers by rote. One point of improvement they notice:—"Nearly the whole of them are associated as married couples. No marriage ceremony is used among them; but when the parties agree to be united, they are thenceforth recognized as husband and wife, and are not allowed to change."

The moral work attracted much of their attention, and the Friends dilate upon it satisfactorily. "The Catechist," they write, "has taken great pains to inform the Aborigines of the existence and character of the Deity, and most of them now have some idea of these important truths. He has translated into one of the dialects a large portion of the first three chapters of Genesis. The natives are daily instructed either in the house of the Catechist or in their own huts, amid the interruptions to which both of these places are subject."

Anyhow, sufficient was seen to satisfy one that the civilizing agencies were at work under Lieutenant Darling, and not commenced, as supposed, under Mr. Robinson two years after. Appended to the Report were certain suggestions for the good of the people. They recommended a further supply of cows, of shoes for wet weather, of boxes for clothing, and of stools for seats. They urged the erection of a church or school-house, and thought the women should be provided with checked cotton bed-gowns, stuff petticoats, checked aprons, and neckerchiefs.

Dr. Ross, the editor of the *Courier*, wished to see the sunny side of the Flinders' experiment, and dilated upon the happiness and security enjoyed by the favoured ones there. The Rev. Dr. Lang, of Sydney, took up his Hobart Town press friend rather smartly:—"Happiness and security, Dr. Ross! The security of death you mean!—the happiness of



leaving their unburied bones to be bleached by the sun and rain in every nook and dell of that island, where they fell, unpitied, by the bullets of Europeans! In thirty years—the period which it required, under the iron rod of Spain, to exterminate all the native inhabitants of Hispaniola—the numerous tribes into which the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land were divided have been reduced, under the *mild sway* of Britain, to 118 souls, imprisoned on an island in Bass's Strait! May the Lord long preserve this miserable remnant of a race so nearly extinct!"

In 1834, Mr. Henry Nickolls was appointed Superintendent, at 182*l.* 10*s.* salary; Mr. Robert Clark, Catechist, at 120*l.*; Mr. Loftus Dickerson, Store-keeper; and Mr. Allen (who subsequently married a daughter of Mr. Robinson's), the Surgeon of the establishment. In that year there were not less than 30 Whites to look after the 120 Blacks.

It is evident that Governor Arthur did not feel satisfied with his prisoners being kept in the Straits; for he made a proposition to the Home Government to let them loose on the southern shore of the continent of New Holland, on the site of the present colonies of Victoria and South Australia, founded directly after the suggestion made by Colonel Arthur. The Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, objected on humane grounds. Varying his scheme, we find the Governor next proposing that Mr. Robinson, who had just brought in his last party of wanderers, should proceed to that opposite coast, with some of the Flinders Island Aborigines, to civilize the wild Australian Blacks. That idea being abandoned, he resolved to send Mr. Robinson to take charge of the island prison. He took command in November 1835. With his accustomed energy, he threw himself into the work of reformation, and quickly revived the spirits of the decaying tribes.

In 1861, reviewing the past, Mr. Robinson said:—"I established at Flinders Island an Aboriginal Fund, which was raised from the proceeds of work performed, and the sale of various articles prepared by them; such as salted mutton-birds, birds' skins, &c.—which were generally sold at Launceston. I also formed an Aboriginal Police, to preserve order, and to decide all disagreements which might arise among them. I also established a circulating medium



amongst them, which was attended with the happiest effects, as it gave them a knowledge of the rights of property; and lastly and consequent upon the latter, I established a market, to which they brought their produce. Thus they acquired the habits of civilized life, and felt an interest in the acquisition of property, which rendered them industrious and cleanly."

Dr. Ross intimated, in his *Courier* of October 8th, 1836, that "Mr. Robinson has been the means of establishing a weekly newspaper among them. It is entirely written by the Aborigines, and is published under the name of the *Aboriginal Flinders Island Chronicle*, on half a sheet of foolscap, every Saturday, price twopence each, and the profits arising from the work are equally divided among the editors." Concerning this, the subsequent Superintendent, Dr. Jenneret, wrote to me:—"I have no knowledge of the newspaper you refer to. None, in my time, were capable of such a work."

We cannot pause in this glorious career of civilization, and again introduce Mr. Robinson as the speaker:—

"At the periodical examination of the schools, some of the native youths were able to answer questions in the leading events of Scripture history, Christian doctrine and duty, arithmetic, the principal facts of geography, and also on several points of useful information. Some very fair specimens of handwriting were exhibited on such occasions; one, in particular, was worthy of notice, being an original address from the writer—a native youth of fifteen years of age, who was employed by me in my office—to his countrymen. It was expressed in simple and tolerably correct language, and breathed a warm spirit of gratitude to myself. In the schools they were taught various handiwork, such as knitting in worsted, sewing, &c.; and they proved to be apt and industrious scholars." In his Progress Report, dated May 17th, 1837, he wrote: "The schools and religious services are still maintained, and the Natives are constant and regular in their attendance. They are rapidly acquiring industrious habits. The settlement is in a very powerful, tranquil state."

What more could be wanted? It was an age of steam. Flinders rose at once, under Mr. Robinson, to its highest



development, like Athens, under Pericles ; and it sank more rapidly into barbarism upon the departure of its master. A little must be placed to that love of "high talk" which ever accompanied the declarations of the Commandant.

The last passage of the celebrated Sydney speech is a painful commentary upon this work of progress : "*The only drawback on the establishment was the great mortality amongst them.*" But even then his exultant spirit hopefully cries :—" But those who did survive were now happy, contented, and useful members of society." In 1861 he saw the non-fulfilment of his prophecy. This is his remarkable expression :—

"The most serious drawback to the success of the establishment was the great mortality among them, which has continued to so lamentable an extent, that at the present time there are but a small remnant living. Had the poor creatures survived to have become a numerous people, I am convinced they would have formed a contented and useful community."

Alas ! it is the story of the Frenchman's horse, that died just when he had acquired the power of living without eating. In the process of regeneration they lost the life they had. Even the Committee of the Aborigines' Society were at last sensible of the folly of this over-legislation ; for, in their Report for 1839, they regretted that "from the first a system had not been applied more suitable to the habits of a roving people, instead of the highly artificial one whose details have been referred to" (in Mr. Robinson's report).

The more *civilized* they became, the more dependent were the Blacks upon their masters for supplies, and the less disposed were they to exert themselves. Listless and good, they wanted energy to pursue the bounding kangaroo, or clamber after an opossum. In Mr. Robinson's letter, March 8th, 1836, we have this announcement : "It has been intimated to the Natives that they are shortly to be supplied with fresh meat, which intelligence affords them much pleasure." It would, certainly ; though it doubtless puzzled their unarithmetical heads what became of the several hundreds of sheep given to them by settlers in 1833, and increasing on Green Island. Besides, the Government had sent cattle and more sheep. Just before the receipt of the Commandant's letter, three hundred breeding sheep and ten cows were forwarded. And yet not once in six months did the Blacks eat of their



own mutton! Some other people preferred fresh meat to salted rations. In 1838 there were still 1800 sheep and 62 head of cattle, professedly belonging to the Natives.

Among the singular crotchets of Mr. Robinson's was that one of altering the names of the Natives. This was sufficiently absurd. The two names of some of the males will strike the reader. Being there with a host of white servants who could not catch the long and liquid words of the Native tongue, it might seem necessary to make a change, but hardly to form so absurd a catalogue as he did. It would be interesting to know whose philological and literary assistance he obtained; some one of his convict servants might have been an M.A. But he evidently imagined he had performed an important and useful service, making it the subject of a special report on September 14th, 1836. He presented two lists—his own nomenclature, classical and grand; and beside it, the aboriginal, or the absurd English, name. These were some of the males:—

Alexander	<i>Long Billy</i>	King George	<i>Old Tom</i>
Alphonso	<i>Big Jemmy</i>	Isaac	<i>Problattener</i>
Alpha	<i>Doctor</i>	Joseph	<i>Rose's Jemmy</i>
Achilles	<i>Rowlebauna</i>	Milton	<i>Penemeroic</i>
Ajax	{ <i>Moultchelar-</i>	Nimrod	<i>Kangaroo Billy</i>
	gene	Omega	<i>Ballywinny</i>
Bonaparte	<i>Little Jacky</i>	Romeo	<i>Tomten</i>
Columbus	<i>Lenerugirin</i>	William Robinson	<i>Pennebricke</i>
Daniel	<i>Goannah</i>	Washington	<i>Mackamee</i>
Francis	{ <i>Big Mary's</i>	Walter George	} <i>Friday</i>
	<i>Jemmy</i>	Arthur	

Among the double names of the females were,—

Queen Adelaide	{ <i>Governor's</i>	Louisa	<i>Jumbo</i>
	<i>Lubra</i>	Lucy	<i>Mytermoon</i>
Queen Andromache	<i>Larrentong</i>	Princess Lalla	} <i>Trugenanna</i>
Agnes	<i>Blind Poll</i>	Rookh	
Princess Clara	<i>Teddeburric</i>	Margaret	<i>Bung</i>
Princess Cleopatra	<i>Kyenrope</i>	Patty	<i>Goneannah</i>
Queen Elizabeth	<i>Big Bet</i>	Rose	<i>Gooseberry</i>
Juliet	<i>John</i>	Susan	<i>Lock Jaw Poll</i>
Jemima	<i>Cranky Poll</i>	Semiramis	<i>Jenny</i>

The following is a list of some of the names of the men on the island in 1834. They are given as spelt in the original document, as Mr. Robinson would also spell them, though



subsequently changes have been made—as *a* for *er*. There were Worethetitilargener and Moullteerlargener, chiefs of the Ben Lomond tribe ; Calamaroweyne, the supposed murderer of Captain Thomas ; Marenerlarger, Teelapana, Walentir-loona, Panacoona, Wowee, Mackamee, Paropa, Nicamenie, Tymethie, Preropa, Pyntharyne, Toinchonc, Peey, Boobyinthie, Toindeburic, Rowlapana, Toby Langta, Lamaima, Conapanny, Packabanny, Wymeric. Three of them, who all died in one fortnight, were husbands of Wild Mary.

Because of the difference of dialects, there naturally grew upon the island a sort of *Lingua Franca*,—a commingling of tongues, Native and English. There was a difficulty in pronouncing our *d* and *s*.

The man who entered most into the feelings and sympathies of the Aborigines of Flinders, was the well-known catechist, Mr. Robert Clark—the *Father Clark* of the Natives.

My first acquaintance with this devoted man was in the beginning of 1842, when he brought to my house several of his juvenile pupils, well clothed, with smiling faces, and who read to me, with correct intonation, several verses from the New Testament. They looked up to him with the same filial regard which his own children felt for him.

Appointed to his position of schoolmaster and catechist in 1834, he, for a little time, gave place to the Rev. T. Dove, Presbyterian clergyman, and assumed a secular office, without diminishing his efforts for the moral good of his dark-coloured friends. He was ultimately obliged to resign, from the adoption of schemes he considered opposed to the welfare of the Aborigines. On his coming to Hobart Town, I became intimately acquainted with him, and attached to his person. After a year or two, to the joy of his old friends, he was restored to his situation as catechist, which he retained until his departure for a better world, in 1850. Often have I listened with deep emotion to his sad stories of the sufferings of his charge, while his tremulous voice and moistened eyes declared the depth and sincerity of his sympathy.

He gained the confidence of all. He would sit down on the ground with the men, and smoke his pipe with them, while listening to their yarns of hunting and war, when he would appeal to them, in their own soft tones, about Him who loved the dark-skinned race, and yearned over them for



good. With the *gins* he was ever a favourite; having the ready kind word and smile for each, with a bit of ribbon for one, a piece of tobacco for another, a joke for a third, and good counsel for all. Mrs. Clark was a helpmate to her husband, and their children were schoolmates and playmates with the Natives.

It was of him that Mr. Robinson wrote on the 2nd of May:—"I have found him a faithful, zealous, and efficient officer, amply qualified for the duties he had to perform, and one willing to render services that had for their object the amelioration and improvement of the Natives." He added a word, also, for Mrs. Clark:—"She has been instrumental in initiating the female Aborigines in the first principles of the Christian religion. The marked results attendant thereupon have been mainly attributed to her personal exertions." Captain Stokes, the explorer, when visiting Flinders in 1842, refers to the lasting effects produced by Mr. Clark upon the Aborigines, "for whom," he says, "they all continue to feel great veneration, and to exhibit that respect which is due to a parent." Elsewhere he remarks:—"We heard all the Natives of both sexes, old and young, sing several hymns taught them by this excellent person."

Mr. Dove, though without the susceptible and genial nature of my Irish friend, was an earnest, faithful man. He was better fitted for the charge at Swanport, to which he retired, and where he resided for many years.

I have a manuscript book, presented to me by the widow of the venerated Rev. Frederick Miller, of Hobart Town, which had been prepared by my old friend Mr. Robert Clark, giving full particulars of an examination held in February 1838, when the Rev. T. Dove, chaplain, presided, and Mr. George Augustus Robinson, Mr. Dickenson, storekeeper, and Dr. Walsh, were spectators.

Young Mr. William Robinson's class first came forward, under the monitorship of Thomas Thompson, and consisting of the following remarkable characters:—Isaac, Edward, Washington, Albert, and Leonidas. Edward is pronounced imperfect in the alphabet, and goes down. Washington attempts to spell; but brave Leonidas, more ambitious, makes a trial of reading from the spelling-book. Leonidas, the hero of the class, repeats the Lord's Prayer, the Collect, the names



of the months and days of the week, in addition to counting up to one hundred.

In Mr. Charles Robinson's class, Neptune attempts to read, and Peter Pindar is pronounced perfect in the alphabet. Neptune is fluent upon early Scripture history, and his creed may be taken as the orthodox of the period. A few of the questions are appended:—

“What will God do to this world by and by?”—“Burn it.”

“What did God make us for?”—“His own purpose.”

“Who are in heaven?”—“God, angels, good men, and Jesus Christ.”

“What sort of a country is heaven?”—“A fine place.”

“What sort of a place is hell?”—“A place of torment.”

“What do you mean by a ‘place of torment’?”—“Burning for ever and ever.”

“What is the seventh day called?”—“Sunday.” (?)

“What do you love God for?”—“God gives me everything.”

Though apt in the general catechism, he fails to count beyond ten. His memory was not mathematical.

Bonaparte answered eight questions, and appeared to have a more decided and satisfactory faith than the Emperor. Being asked, “Do you like God?” he promptly answered, “Yes.”

The boys' class taught by the catechist formed, of course, the prominent feature of the examination. Bruni, Thompson, and Walter could read, write, and even cipher a little. The two first died soon afterwards. The last was subsequently known to me. He was far above the average of the Aborigines. He could converse with intelligence, and reason with ability. I saw his Bible on the side-table, when I took tea with him and his wife, in their own neat little hut.

I regret to say that the report of female progress, though brief, is not commendatory: “Clara reads—Daphne attempts to read—Emma attempts to read—Rose attempts to spell—Sophia attempts to spell—Sabina imperfect in the alphabet—Henrietta imperfect in the alphabet—Lucy imperfect in the alphabet—and Wild Mary imperfect in the alphabet.” It may be presumed that Wild Mary was a step above Queen Adelaide, as that lady, though present, did not enter the lists.



My particular friend, Lalla Rookh or Truganina, was not examined in literature.

The senior women's class, under Mrs. Clark, distinguished themselves. Bessy reads the whole of No. 1 Spelling-book. Patty attempts to read. Paulina spells words of three letters. Juliet reads four easy pages. Semiramis knows her English letters—a feat beyond the powers of the Assyrian Queen.

A crowd of sovereigns appeared on the following day. The truth must be told that they least distinguished themselves. King Alfred, however, was perfect in his alphabet, and could tell who made him. King George knew the first man, and who made the trees and tall mountain, but was not troubled with more questions. King Alpha was content with playing ditto to his royal brother George, and said that God made the tall mountain. But Napoleon rushed boldly forth to the front, with ready replies, after attempting to spell. It is very unsatisfactory, however, to quote a remark upon this conqueror: "This native attends school but very seldom, and is not improving. Mr. Dove addressed him very feelingly on his neglect of instruction." Poor fellow! he lived but little time to profit by the White man's teaching.

The history of the last few years of Flinders is soon told. It is chiefly the story of death. Captain Stokes found that, of 200 that had been captured, 150 had perished. Governor Arthur wrote home, on January 27th, 1835, deploring the rapid decline, and adding, "Their number has been reduced to only 100." To save the younger ones, fourteen were sent from the island to the Orphan School of Hobart Town. One of the earliest victims was Mungo, the guide to the parties of Messrs. Robertson, Jorgenson, and Batman. Poor Manalagana, the noble chief, died in March 1836. Dr. Story gives it as his opinion to me, that "the deaths at Flinders Island and the attempt at civilizing the Natives were consequent on each other."

No wonder that Mr. Robinson was anxious to remove the people from the island, when he was appointed Protector in Port Phillip, and that his suggestion was received with acclamation by the pent-up islanders. A petition, signed by the twenty-nine living men, was addressed to Governor Sir John Franklin, on Aug. 12th, 1838, begging for translation to



Port Phillip. His Excellency's heart was moved, and he directed Mr. Montague, then Colonial Secretary, to open up a correspondence with the Government of New South Wales about their reception. Some opposition being presented, the question was referred home, when Lord Glenelg objected to their removal.

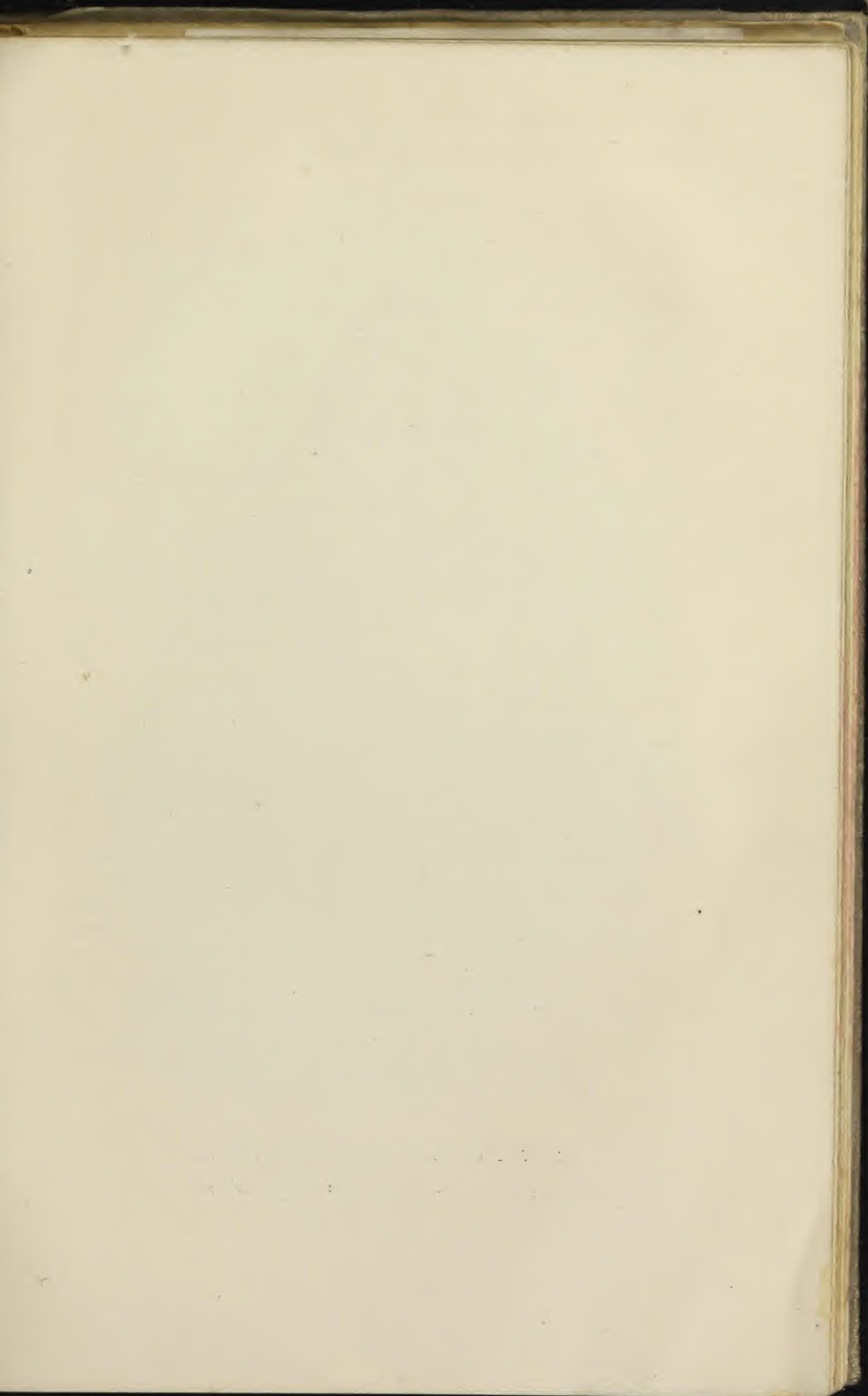
After the departure of Mr. Robinson, and the failure of their hopes of transmission to Port Phillip, the Aborigines sank into an apathy from which they never emerged. Captain Smith officiated for a time, and then Mr. Fisher; but Dr. Jeanneret received the appointment of Superintendent in 1842, at the hands of Governor Sir John Franklin, who, like his benevolent and learned lady, was ever interested in the condition of the Blacks.

Dr. Jeanneret was virtually the last Superintendent of Flinders Island. He remained to see the embarkation of the Natives under his successor, Dr. Milligan, all bound for Oyster Cove, in D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

After the departure of the people, the island was let with the stock to Captain Smith, at a rental of 100*l.* a year. The Bishop in 1854 thus moralized over the past: "Nearly eleven years have passed since I landed on the self-same rocks with Sir John Franklin. How changed the scene! Then, the beach was covered with the Aborigines, who greeted their kind and loved benefactor with yells of delight; capering and gesticulating with movements more indicative of exuberant, wild joy, than of elegance or propriety. Now all this is still. It was painful to witness the scene of ruin in the once neat and well-ordered settlement. Desolation stared me in the face, wherever the eye was turned: the comfortable house of the Superintendent rapidly falling to decay; the gardens well-nigh rooted up; the range of buildings in which the Aborigines were formerly hutted, untenanted, broken, and tumbling down."

Such is the last sad scene of the Flinders' drama. Since the departure of the Aborigines, I have passed by the island some half-a-dozen times. As I last gazed upon its storm-torn coast, and my eyes rested upon its bleak and fantastic hills, the whole story, in all its varied and stirring phases, came before me, and I felt quickened in my resolution to tell my countrymen the sorrows of the Tasmanians.









PATTY IN OYSTER COVE HOLIDAY COSTUME.  
(*Photographed by* DR. NIXON, LORD BISHOP OF TASMANIA.)



## OYSTER COVE.

The terrible mortality of the Natives on Flinders Island excited the sympathy of their friends in Hobart Town. Several times had Mr. George Washington Walker and I conversed upon the subject, and wished that the remnant could be brought nearer town. We knew that this was the desire of the Blacks themselves, who said if they could only live in their own country again, they would all be healthy and happy. One Hobart Town paper had a violent leader upon the subject, expatiating upon the outrages of 1831, and predicting a bloody renewal of them, should the Natives be allowed to leave the Flinders' asylum. As if twelve men, the number then alive, could light up the fires of country homesteads, and resume the spear of slaughter, in a colony of eighty thousand Whites!

The Natives obtained their wish. In October 1847, forty-four of the Tasmanian race were removed from Flinders Island to Oyster Cove. There were twelve men, twenty-two women, and ten children, or non-adults. Some of these, the latter particularly, were half-castes. The boys ranged from the age of four to fourteen years; the girls, from seven to thirteen. When Mr. Clark wrote to me in August 1849, he had then with him but one child, six others being placed at the Orphan School—to die.

OYSTER COVE is but a few miles' distance from Hobart Town. At the junction of the Derwent with the ocean, the Storm Bay opens to the south-east, and the narrow D'Entrecasteaux Channel to the south-west; these waters being separated by Bruni Island. The first little harbour in this channel, after crossing the mouth of North-west Bay, is Oyster Cove.

For a time the new settlement prospered, or seemed to prosper. Mr. Clark wrote to me cheerfully: "They are now comfortable," said he; "have a full supply of provisions; are able to till their gardens, sow peas, beans, and potatoes; anxious to earn money, of which they know to a certain extent the value. They are thankful to the Lieutenant-Governor and the Colonial Secretary for removing them from Flinders Island, and to Dr. Milligan for all the trouble he



has taken. The women can all make their own clothes, and cook their food by either boiling or roasting. Their houses are comfortable and clean. They are as contented as possible." So far this is all satisfactory.

But at the end of 1854, there remained of the original forty-four, only three men, eleven women, and two boys at the station. Yet the colonists found themselves charged with a formidable bill for the establishment that was rent free, for the expenses that year stood at 2006*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.*

When I visited Oyster Cove in 1859, a sad spectacle met my eyes. I simply now record what I stated to Dr. Nixon, Bishop of Tasmania, on my return to Hobart Town. I went to him, knowing him to be really interested in the Aborigines, and aware that a long and painful illness, which subsequently led to his resignation of the episcopate, had prevented his attention to their claims. Blame might naturally be attached to somebody. The blight had fallen upon the Natives, and produced the disorders, doubtless, which appeared in their midst. Mr. Dandridge, located with them, seemed kindly disposed toward them, but evidently regarded himself as a sort of ration-distributor only, being, as he told me himself, convinced that he could do nothing to arrest their progress to the grave. He and his wife were then keeping a school for the children of the farmers and labourers outside of the Reserve. Instruction was considered hopeless for the Blacks. But might not a little more have been done?

I saw a miserable collection of huts and out-buildings, the ruins of the old penal establishment, profoundly dirty, and swarming with fleas, as I found to my cost. The Superintendent could not clean all the places himself; he had no man-servant, and the Blacks had no inclination to do the work. So it was not done. The buildings formed the sides of a square, enclosing a large courtyard. The officer's family were not luxuriously housed. The Natives were in several contiguous huts or offices. The earthen floor of these was in a sad state. Some had parts of wooden planking remaining. The sides of the huts were in a ruinous condition. The roofs were not all waterproof. Many of the windows were broken, and the doors of some closed imperfectly. The furniture was gone. Here and there a stool was seen, or a log, though the women preferred squatting on the ground or floor, and that



not always in the most decent attitude. The apology for bedsteads and beds was the most deplorable of all. I turned round to the Superintendent, and expressed my concern at the frightfully filthy state of the bedclothes. In some places I noticed but one blanket as the only article on the shelf, and remarked the insufficiency of bedclothing for old people, and at that cold season of the year. Mr. Dandridge appeared as surprised as chagrined, and, calling the women, commanded them to tell where all the blankets had gone to. One of them quite coolly answered: "Bad white fellow—him steal 'em all." The Superintendent's explanation was, that they were so given up to drink as to sell for liquor the Government blankets, and even their very clothing, to the low population about. But could no protection have been afforded them?

The gardens, so praised by Mr. Clark, had all gone. There was no sign of reading in those wretched abodes. The cooking was managed, apparently, by boiling, judging by the big round pot I saw in each hut, and generally in the middle of the floor. Several times I saw the dogs licking out the vessel, for both brutes and human beings seemed to have common bed and board. The weekly rations then were 14 lbs. meat, 10 lbs. flour, 3 ozs. tea, 14 ozs. sugar, 3 ozs. soap, 2 ozs. salt, and 3 ozs. tobacco. For clothing, an allowance of blue serge,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  yds. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , was made, which they rudely made into a loose garment. A flannel petticoat, red cap, handkerchief, comforter, cotton frock and jumper, were supposed to be provided, and some I saw in stock at the store. Handkerchiefs, at any rate, were not required, judging from appearances. When expecting company, they were decked out suitably. Calico for chemises was once issued, and, doubtless, made up by some of them in olden days. The polka jacket was gaily got up, though only worn on festive occasions. When I made a remark as to the paucity of clothes, and their miserable appearance in such weather, there was the repetition of the complaint of their selling for drink the dresses, even though all had been stamped with the Government mark.

In the time of Governor Denison they were happier, according to their own account, as that gentleman often paid them a visit, bringing some of his family with him,



and having a packet of toys, marbles and balls. He would spread out the treasure, join in their games, play even at leapfrog with them, and finish off with merry laughter and good feed. Lady Denison would sometimes ride down with a party of ladies, and bring a lot of them up to town in cabs for a change. His Excellency had sent down a stage-coach to fetch some to Government House for a dinner, and afterwards give them a laugh at the theatre. Dr. Nixon, the learned and kind-hearted bishop, often paid them a visit, giving them ghostly counsel, but never omitting, according to their version, to bring them some *tucker*. A basket of apples, and a genial smile, brought attentive listeners to his devotional exercises. The removal of the Governor, and the lengthened indisposition of the Bishop, had darkened their latter days.

They spoke freely of their friends, but could not forbear a word about the past Black War and its troubles. The "bad white fellows" often came up in their talk. The "bad white fellows" haunted them still, stealing their clothes, and making them drunk. Little or no restraint was laid upon their movements. No fence enclosed their ground, and the wide Bush was theirs for wanderings. Occasionally they indulged in a ramble for days, and returned improved in health by their absence. The diseases troubling them were those arising from neglected colds. I was taken to a bit of ground enclosed by Walter, which was the cemetery of the departed. There was nothing romantic about it, though much that was painfully suggestive.

The moral condition of the station was the subject of indignant complaint from Maryann, the half-caste wife of Walter: "We had souls in Flinders," said she, "but we have none here. There we were looked after, and the bad Whites were kept from annoying us. Here we are thrown upon the scum of society. They have brought us among the offscouring of the earth (alluding to the convict population about). Here are bad of all sorts. We should be a great deal better if some one would read and pray to us. We are tempted to drink, and all bad practices, but there is neither reading nor prayer. While they give us food for the body, they might give us food for the soul. They might think of the remnant of us poor creatures, and make us



happy. Nobody cares for us." These are the expressions I find recorded in my note-book.

Mr. Dandridge informed me that the Bishop had made some provision for their religious instruction, by requesting a neighbouring clergyman to give them an occasional service. But the gentleman was unpopular; and whenever his horse was seen on the hill, it was a signal for general dispersion. There being no congregation, the service was not held.

It was from Maryann that I obtained an account of the last hours of my friend Robert Clark.

Removing from Flinders Island, with his beloved Blacks, he hoped to spend some happy years with them at Oyster Cove, and enjoy some of the sweets of Christian fellowship, as he said, by being only a few miles from Hobart Town. His kind-hearted wife, whose benevolent exertions for the good of the Aborigines were so appreciated by Mr. Robinson, was pleased with the prospect of removal, not merely because she hoped it would be for the happiness of her dark charge, but from a mother's natural anxiety about her own large family, whom she wished to see placed once more with the civilized community.

He arrived with sanguine expectations. He had forty-five Natives remaining. He would do his best for them. He would get gentlemen of Hobart Town interested in their welfare. He would ask friends to visit them. He would have books, pictures, toys, and other amusements. He would excite their ardour to raise provisions for the Hobart Town market. He would establish them in a good dairy farm. He would make them live on the fat of the land, and save money beside. He would so employ them, so keep them interested, that they should not die at that terrible rate they had died in the Straits. He would live long as the father of a happy family.

Alas! there could be no arrest of the fatal disease. They still sickened and died. The rest began to lose heart. They had believed their decline caused by the climate and confinement of Flinders Island, and were so sure that they could not die so in the new home on their own native land. When they discovered the delusion, they were chilled and disheartened. Yes—they were to die—they must die—they would all die soon. Then why should they till the ground? For



whom would the potatoes be grown? What would be the use of a dairy? Why need they trouble about dress—they, the dying ones? Pictures lost their interest. Books were left unopened, or looked at with glazed eyes. They read their fate. In such a mood they cared for nothing. They lost interest in all about them. Everything seemed to remind them of their end. Was it strange, then, that when temptation came near they fell? When the drink was brought secretly, was it strange that they took it as the Aryans their divine Soma, the drink of the gods, the reliever of sorrow, the life-giver, the joy-friend?

Mr. Clark was spared the grief of seeing the worst. His wife's health was affected by the ill-conditioned quarters allotted to her family. She was removed to Hobart Town for a change, and died there. Her tender-hearted husband returned to Oyster Cove a changed man. He had lost a partner indeed. He strove at first to forget the past, and live for his future. But his future had been bound up with the life of his wife, and the life of his Natives. The first had gone, the second was going. Why should he stay? In a few weeks the melancholy of the Aborigines seemed to fall heavily upon him. He took to his bed of death.

At this stage of the story, Maryann pointed to a ruined hut near which we had walked. It was of slab timber, roughly hewn, and roughly placed, but now falling to decay. The paling sides had gaped open. The brick-nogged enclosure had given way. The windows and doors had been stolen. A luxuriant Macquarie Harbour vine had spread itself over the roof, seeking, but in vain, to bind the ruin together. Native flowers crept into the vine, sheltering their weak stems beneath the strong and hardy climber. "Here," said my weeping companion, "here poor Father died."

After a little silence, the sad story was resumed. "I attended him," said she, "along with his daughter, night and day. But all the people wanted to do something for him, for all so loved him. And then he would talk to us, and pray with us. He would tell me what to read to him from the Bible, when too weak to hold the book himself. How he would talk to us! When he thought he was going to die, he got the room full, and bade us 'Good-bye.' He held up his hands and prayed for us. He did love us.



And then he said, while he was crying, 'Mind you be sure and all meet me in heaven!'"

The poor creature could not tell me any more, but fairly sobbed aloud. I tried to comfort her, saying that God had kindly allowed him to go to his wife in heaven, and to the good Blacks who had died before him, and who would be so glad to see her there. If only Walter and she would keep his counsels, they might yet see him again. She shook her head, and mournfully, and yet with bitterness, replied, "No one cares for the Natives' souls now that Father Clark is gone."

And now she has gone, and Walter has gone, and the Blacks have all gone. Father Clark had gone to his rest before such blighting sorrow came. It is good to read of such a man as he. It is a relief to the harshness and selfishness of life to know such a man as he. It would be a blessing to the world if more would live his life and die his death, even should clouds dim the horizon of hope.

I proceed now with a brief notice of the Natives on the station at my visit in 1859.

Old Sophia, then apparently over sixty years of age, had white hair, and the most monkey-like face I ever saw upon a human being. The recession of the lower jaw and the low cast of countenance denoted an inferior *physique*. She was born on Bruni Island, and had given birth to two children. A troop of mangy dogs accompanied their aged mistress, who held forth long harangues to the curs, that answered in snapping barks of recognition. Two of them lay in her wretched bed with her, to keep her back warm, as she told me.

Ragged Wapperty was not a desirable-looking old lady. Her country was near Patrick's Head, to the north-east. Her native name was known formerly as Woonoteah coota mena—*Thunder and lightning*. There was nothing brilliant about her then. Her countrywoman Flora seemed about forty to forty-five years old. Her mouth was the most demonstrative part of her person. As I was being shown through the store by the Superintendent, and receiving explanation of the dresses worn by the ladies, Flora appeared at the door. She was called in to give me an illustration of the charms of a holiday attire, such as may be seen in the photograph taken



by the Bishop of Tasmania. Without a judicious regard for the proprieties, or from an antiquated piece of coquetry, she suddenly untied a string, and let fall to the ground her only serge garment. Then she proceeded leisurely to enrobe herself in the finery, and was evidently gratified at my expressed satisfaction.

Patty, *alias* Cooneana, the *Ring-tailed Opossum*, might have been from fifty to fifty-five; though, in the account of her death at the Hobart Town Hospital, in July 1867, she was said to be seventy. She left but two women behind her. She was the wife of Leonidas, of whose literary acquirements notice is given in the chapter on Flinders Island. Patty belonged to the Kangaroo Point tribe, of the Derwent. Her distinguishing feature was a very broad nose. Emma, rather younger than Patty, was of the Patrick Head tribe, and had been married to Albert. Caroline, commonly called Queen Caroline, was the relict of the renowned chieftain of the Big River Natives, Roumetewah, or the *Wombat*. Her native name was Ganganinnanah. She appeared one of the most aged among the party, and sat away from the others crying in an imbecile manner. The Coal River tribe had been her childhood's friends.

Bessy Clark, called after the wife of the Catechist, was then under forty years of age, and was the best-looking of the sisterhood. There was no recession of the lower jaw, and her good-humour gave a pleasant expression to her swarthy features. Her native name was Pinnano bathæ, the *Kangaroo head*. She had not led a forest life with her people, having been rescued in early childhood. When Mr. G. A. Robinson was out with his son and others seeking after the Macquarie Harbour tribe, a family was disturbed at their roaring fire so suddenly, that a mother in her fright forgot her little girl whom she had left near the warm embers. The deserted infant was placed on the back of young Robinson, and ultimately confided to the care of a country-woman on Flinders Island. When old enough, she was sent for education and training to the Orphan School at Newtown, near Hobart Town. It was thought she would there be removed from the temptations of aboriginal life. Subsequently she was removed to Flinders, and married to Augustus the Magnificent.





BESSY CLARK, OF OYSTER COVE.  
(*Photographed by MR. C. WOOLLEY, 1866.*)







This lady indulged me with full particulars of her courting days. "He," said she (meaning Augustus), "tell me plenty times he love me, then he make love, then he ask me be his wife. I tell him go ask Father (Mr.) Clark. Father and Mother say, 'You marry him.' So I did." She then confided to me some of her conjugal troubles. Like many more of his sex, he had relaxed in his attentions to his partner; though, having the youngest and most beautiful, he might be supposed out of the reach of more attractive influences. Anyhow, he was tired of home delights, and was seriously contemplating leaving her for a whaling cruise, as William Lanné, the last man, had done. "And now," added she, "he want to leave me." Some of the old ladies near commenced in rude English to declaim upon the evil propensities of men in general, and Augustus in particular. Of course I expressed my sympathy, and declared that if he dared carry out his wicked intentions, I would come and take her back with me to Port Phillip. This caused shouts of laughter from the aboriginal ladies. Bessy wished to give me a parting gift. Not knowing what to bestow, I suggested it should be something of her own manufacture. After thinking a while, she darted off into the swamp near, and reappeared with a handful of native flax. Squatting down on the ground, she turned up her garment, exposed her thigh, and began diligently rubbing the fibres on her bared leg, until she had made a length of string for me. She spoke very feelingly of Mr. Clark, and repeatedly uttered, as if half to herself, "Very good man! All Black fellows love him."

Laughing little Lalla Rookh, or Truganina, was my especial favourite of the party. She acted among the rest as if she were indeed the sultana. She was then much over fifty years of age, and preserved some of those graces which made her beauty a snare in olden days, and sadly tried the patience of respective husbands. Her coquetry reminded me of the faded loveliness of French courts; and, as she stood smirking and smiling beside me, I thought of the septuagenarian admirer of Voltaire. Her features, in spite of her bridgeless nose, were decidedly pleasing, when lighted up by her sparkling black eye in animated conversation. Her nose was of the genuine saucy *retroussé* order. She was further adorned with a fair moustache, and well-developed, curly whiskers,



that were just beginning to turn with advancing years. She was in 1829 the wife of the bold Wooreddy, the chief of the Bruni tribe. Her appreciation of English society was a sore trial to her more solemn-looking native companion. As her name so often appears in this work, it is needless to say more of this sylvan goddess of Tasmania. *She is the last of the race.*

Maryann, the half-caste, was the wife of Walter, King Walter, or George Arthur Walter. She had the appearance of her mixed race. Her delicate hand, her dark eyes, her nose and mouth, declared the native mother; but her broad and lofty forehead indicated the European descent of the father. She was unquestionably a woman of weight in the country, bringing down upon the floor as she walked a pressure of some seventeen or eighteen stone. There was not only vigour of intellect, but a strength and independence of will, stamped upon her expansive features. The base of her brain represented the portentous character of animal appetites, while the loftiness and breadth elsewhere exhibited the force of moral sentiments.

Her mother, Sarah, had been stolen from her forest home by one of the early sealers of the Straits, whose name was Cottrel Cochrane. He had not proved a cruel husband, nor a wholly neglectful father. When, however, Mr. Robinson made his raid upon the Straitsmen, and carried off their dark-skinned partners, Maryann found a new home on Flinders Island. There she was cared for as the daughter of a black woman rather than the child of an Englishman. Her associates were her mother's race, and she felt her degradation in the presence of her whiter female acquaintance. With such extraordinary powers, had she been received into a respectable family, and treated in a proper manner, she might have been a happier and more useful woman. As it was, she became the wife of Walter. She never had a child.

The masculine element of Oyster Cove was not in the ascendant. There was poor *Tippoo Saib*, no longer a terrible warrior, like his Hindoo namesake, of tiger celebrity, but old, feeble, and nearly blind. He was of the Coal River tribe, and claimed Flora for his bride. Augustus, the husband of Bessy Clark, has already been presented. Willie, of whom the women seemed never tired of talking, was the youngest



living of the Tasmanians, and had just before reached his majority. He was declared to be "fine young man—plenty beard—plenty laugh—very good, that fellow." As he was absent on a whaling voyage, I had not the opportunity of seeing him then; though, as William Lanné, the last of the Tasmanian men, he was in Hobart Town at the time of another visit, in 1867.

Black Allen, Jackey, the *Leonidas* of Flinders Island, was the husband of the *Ring-tailed 'Possum*, Patty. He had associated with Whites from a boy, and had accompanied Mr. John Batman in his expedition after the Blacks in 1830. I regret to say that Jackey was much advanced in one civilized habit—that of indulgence in strong drink. This was ultimately the cause of his death—being drowned when returning drunk from Hobart Town, in May 1861.

Walter was far above the rest of the people. He was of royal blood, being the son of King George; and he was named George Arthur, after the Governor of the colony. His face presented no aggravation of the Native features, though sufficiently betraying the Black man. If standing on the steps of the Piazza di Spagna in Rome, he would have been often selected as a model for his magnificent head. His nose was depressed, a characteristic of his tribe; but his eye was of even unusual expressiveness. His general aspect was one of seriousness and melancholy.

I am not ashamed to confess that, when I have sometimes stood silently and thoughtfully before an Aborigine, and looked, though but for a moment, into that dark and dreamy eye of his, catching the expression of its melancholy gaze, I have been oppressed with the feeling that there lay something behind that glance I so wanted to know, but never could know, a something he might dimly conceive, but not accurately realize. Once, when so I looked, and so I felt, before my friend Walter, he answered my silent speech with such a look and start as I shall never forget, and even now remember with moistened eyes. Involuntarily he held out his hand, grasped mine, and walked quietly away. The extremes of colour had met, and both knew, without being ever known. When after a few moments we walked together again, and spoke upon indifferent subjects, there was such a gentleness of manner in him, so subdued a tone, that I knew I had



gained his heart, and developed his nature. But for what?—for whom? Going afterwards into his hut, he reappeared with some pebbles in a bit of rag. They were diamonds, so called, which he had gathered on Flinders Island. He put them in my hand. It was his treasure. He had no child and no brother. I understood him, and accepted of his gift. He has gone to his fathers, and his present is one of my most cherished mementoes.

He was then employed to take passengers to and from the steamer, on its way from the Huon to Hobart Town. He received one shilling a day for attention to the mail-bags, and earned money by the execution of various business commissions. He cultivated at his leisure a part of his own little farm of twenty acres. Having been able to learn more than his countrymen, he had quite a civilized appearance, spoke English with fluency, and even wrote with moderate accuracy. His Majesty, King Walter, took me into particular favour, and invited me to a banquet in the palace—or,—tea in the hut.

Arrived at the door of a neat three-roomed Bush cottage, I was received with many smiles by the buxom Maryann, who introduced me within. There I found my royal host conversing with a Sydney half-caste, who had come on a friendly visit. The room into which I was brought had many tokens of civilization and gentility wanting in most of the country cottages of England. The furniture, though homely, was suitable and comfortable. A carpet covered the floor. Not a particle of dust could be seen. A few prints adorned the walls, and books lay on a side-table. The Bible occupied a conspicuous position. The daily newspaper was there, as Walter was a regular subscriber for the press. The table was laid with quite a tempting appearance, and a thorough good cup of tea was handed round by the jovial-looking hostess. It was about the last evidence of civilization to be witnessed in connection with the interesting race of Tasmanians.

Our conversation was an interesting and a merry one. The Sydney half-caste, out of respect for the white visitor, soon quietly retired, and left me alone with the proprietors of the neat little hut. I have elsewhere described the gift of some Flinders Island diamonds from poor Walter. I was to receive a parting remembrance from his wife. He had



given me what was most valuable in his eyes. She presented me with what was pleasing in hers. It was a charming necklace of the smallest and most brilliantly-polished shells I have ever seen. Even then I felt the delicacy of her nature, as she said, putting the glittering object in my hand: "Give that to your daughter." I thanked her, and inquired if my lassie should wear it as a necklace. "No," replied my poor friend, "let her wear it on her back hair as the Indian women do." Many years have passed; but I never see my daughter adorned with this pretty wreath without thinking of Maryann the half-caste.

When I parted with them, a thorough cordiality of feeling had been established between us. Knowing the moral danger of their position, I earnestly warned them of the evils of intemperance; for what seemed so friendly to them in their weary lives of objectless effort, and when so companionless of sympathy, as the cup that elevates and cheers, although it blights and it intoxicates! It was needful warning. The curse had already been felt in their little homestead, for Walter had several times fallen to the drunkard's stage. One evening, in May 1861, he and Jack Allen went on board their boat at the Hobart Town wharf, on their way to Oyster Cove. They had been to the public-house, and were seen in a state unfit for the voyage. After proceeding three miles, when off Sandy Bay, the boat was upset, and both Walter and his mate sank to the bottom of the Derwent.

We will now hear what Captain Stokes, the explorer, had to say of our two friends, whom he saw on Flinders Island in 1842:—"Walter and Maryann, a married couple who had recently returned from Port Phillip, where they had been living in the family of the former superintendent, Mr. Robinson, were so civilized and proficient in all the plain parts of education, that they possessed great influence over their countrymen, who, incited by the contemplation of their superiority, were apparently desirous of acquiring knowledge. The barracks in which the Natives dwell form a square of good stone buildings; but Walter and his wife have a separate cottage, with a piece of land attached. Maryann is a very tolerable needlewoman, and capable of teaching the others." In Dr. Jeanneret's time the pair dwelt in a hut apart from the rest.



I have now before me the original letter addressed by Walter George Arthur when he sought to buy a piece of land near the aboriginal station of Oyster Cove. The letter occupies more than three pages of note-paper, and has been rather roughly struck off in a hurry. It has been kindly presented to me by Sir Richard Dry, who thus permitted Mr. Surveyor-General Calder to keep a certified copy in the office. Walter entreats Dr. Milligan, the Protector, to get a certain eight-acre block for him, and, as he says, "ascertain from the Government what would they charge for it, the 8 acres." He gives his reasons for the purchase, and is generous enough to use the plural number in the first person; for his wife, Maryann, being a scholar, and weighing nearly twenty stone, was a partner demanding consideration. "We would very much like to have it," he continues, "to make it a little homestead for ourselves. My reasons for Troubleing you so much is that there is no distance from the water's edge, and that it is more Dryer than the other Piece of ground up the creek by Claytons, and not only that, if we put anything into the ground up the creek it either gets trodden to Pieces or otherwise ruttet up by somebody, or spoiled in some way so that we can't do any good by it." He is too independent to solicit eight acres of the soil seized by the Whites from his nation, but adds: "I mean for to buy it out."

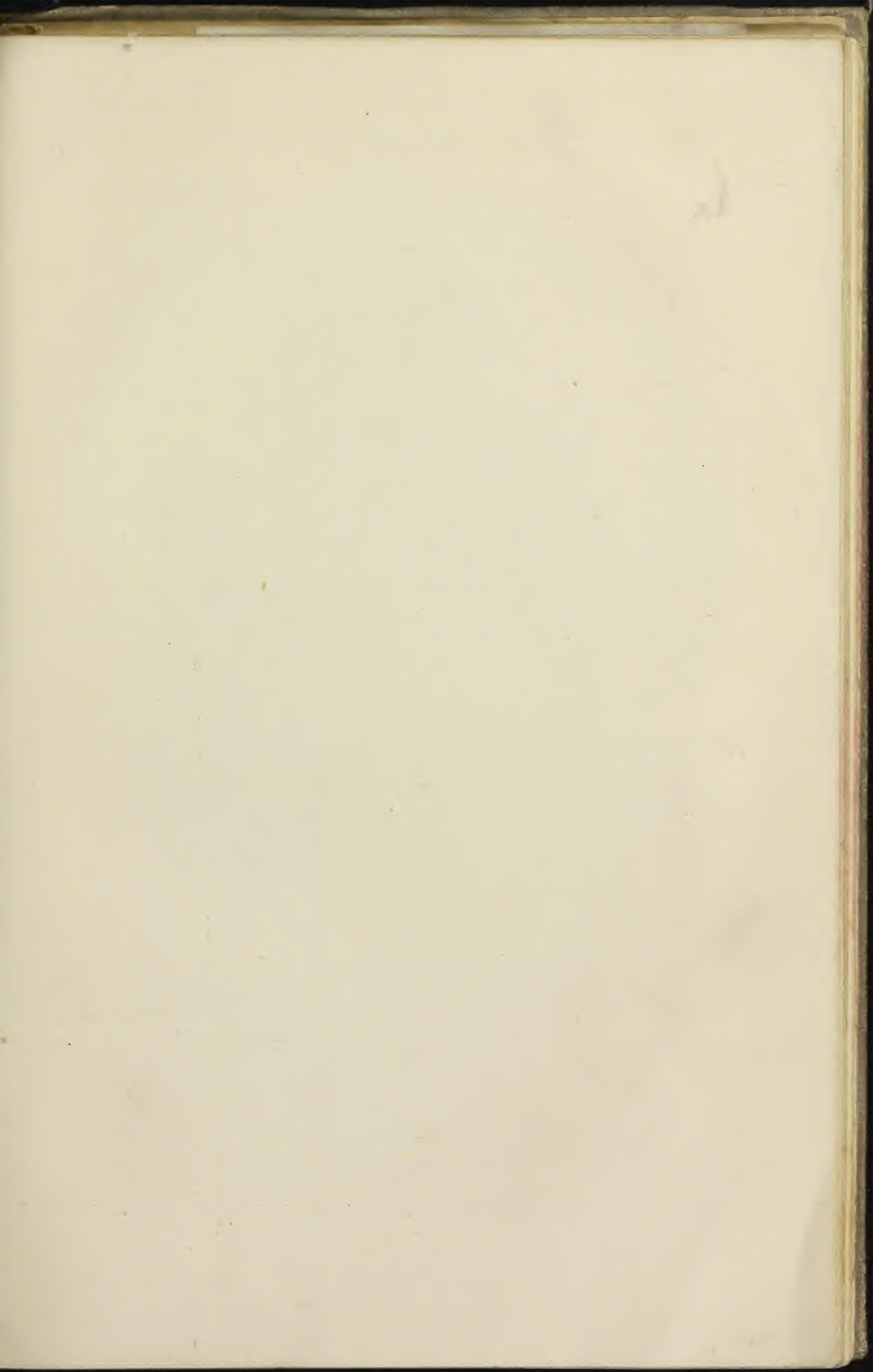
Walter, believing himself possessed of sufficient means to keep an assigned servant, applied to Government, in 1856, for a convict man. This was his letter:—

"I beg respectfully to apply for permission to hire a Pass-holder Servant man subject to existing regulations."

Although many a white man who had been exiled for his country's good, and who was utterly illiterate, obtained this privilege, it was not thought expedient to place a Christian Englishman under the authority of a *savage*, and the application was refused. Mr. Calder, who knew him well, gives this report, in 1868, of my aboriginal acquaintance, as it is in reply to a question of my own through a friend:—

"Mr. Bonwick asks if the Blacks of Tasmania were capable of *true civilization*. My reply is, 'Yes, undoubtedly;' and I give as an example the case of Walter George Arthur, a Tasmanian aboriginal, whom I knew well, who was captured when a mere infant, and brought up and educated at the









WALTER GEORGE ARTHUR, AND HIS WIFE MARY ANN THE HALF-CASTE.



Queen's Orphan School (at Hobart Town). His ideas were perfectly English, and there was not the smallest dash of the savage in him. He was a very conversible man, fond of reading, and spoke and wrote English quite grammatically. His spelling was also quite correct. This man had a hundred acres of land, and knew his rights in relation thereto quite as well as you do yours. An instance of this, quite as creditable to his acuteness, sense of right, and of honourable feelings, was related to me by our old friend Bennison, the surveyor. One of Arthur's neighbours was a grasping and rather unprincipled fellow, who mistook Arthur for a person with whom he might do as he pleased, and encroached on a cultivated part of his land, which Arthur had no idea of suffering. So, after expostulating with him to no purpose, he employed and paid Bennison to resurvey his land, which was done in presence of both litigants. This operation proved that Arthur was right, and that he knew his proper boundaries quite well. And when he saw that his opponent was satisfied, he said to him, 'Well, Mr. —, though you have tried to wrong me, I will treat you very differently from what I believe you would have done to me, if I were in your place. You can come on to my land and remove your crop when it is ripe.'"

He was not quite civilized after all, for such conduct was scarcely that generally adopted by our enlightened countrymen.

### THE SEALERS.

The rough sealers of the stormy Bass's Straits would form an interesting chapter in the early history of the colonies, apart from their association with the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land, and the part they took in the Black War.

The primitive *Straitsmen* were mostly runaway convicts, of a seafaring turn. On shore they would have been Bush-rangers, and defied the law. On the waters, at the onset, these bold spirits, in their little whale-boats, waylaid vessels, and levied black-mail upon the cargo. Occasionally they hovered near some coast settlement, and dashed upon a solitary settler for supplies. They seemed the veritable descendants of the ancient Sea-kings.



Either the force of circumstances, or the development of latent honesty, led them to change their mode of life, and confine their operations to more legitimate pursuits. The growth of commerce converted them into producers. The granite islands which form a kind of Giant's Causeway from Victoria to Tasmania, afforded them at once a home and a field of labour. In sheltered nooks they raised a cabin, enclosed a garden plot, obtained some goats, and sometimes had no other companion than man's own faithful friend—a dog. Hunting for the seal in those tempestuous seas, for the sake of skin and oil, was a perilous undertaking. Flinders, discoverer of the Straits' seals and Flinders Island, became indirectly associated with the extinction of the furred animal and the dark-skinned Aborigine.

The MUTTON-BIRD, the sorrow of the aboriginal captive slave of the sealer, is so called from its supposed taste. It is the Sooty Petrel of naturalists. Web-footed, it skims, with its long wings, over the ocean for its food, the floating spawn, or a green slimy substance. Smaller than a duck, but somewhat larger than a pigeon, it accumulates fat to an enormous extent, and furnishes by pressure alone a considerable amount of oil. The time of incubation is toward the end of the year. The female comes to land, burrows in the sand of the shore, or the decomposed granite of the islands, often to the depth of four feet, and deposits its eggs. These were diligently procured by the black women, and carried by the sealers with their seal oil to Launceston and other markets.

The feathers were plucked and dried, being used for beds, and other purposes. In warm weather the organ of scent is rather disturbed, as I have experienced more than once, when one rested upon a bed of ill-prepared mutton-bird feathers. It would take about five-and-twenty birds to produce a pound of feathers, which used to sell for sixpence. The sealers' women had an ingenious mode of catching the birds to procure their feathers. They selected the very early morning, when the birds that had stayed on the island by night were not yet stirring. Having previously got a large pit made, with a brush fence on one side, they would rouse the birds from their slumbers, and drive the long-winged ones, like a flock of sheep, toward the hole.

The poor stolen *gins* were literally the slaves of the sealers.



They were removed to the rocky islets of the Straits, and made to till the land, collect sea-birds and feathers, hunt after and preserve the skins of the wallaby, pick up the nautilus shell driven on the sands by the storm, and take their turn at the oar.

That the connection was not absolute misery may be believed, and that the course of existence was relieved by some sunny scenes, if shaded by darker memories. I have heard of some instances of men holding family prayer with their half-caste children, and of others who obtained a Bible, and instructed the young in their duties. The mother, under such circumstances, would, at least, be comfortable.

The history of old Munro, the "King of the Sealers," is a favourable one for the times. For a quarter of a century he lived on Preservation Island, near the main, and in Banks' Strait; it was so called from the preservation of a crew there in a shipwreck. There he held sway over his wild neighbours, who were accustomed to go to the "Governor of the Straits," and refer to his judgment and decision their small subjects of litigation; although an *Old Hand* declared to me that the secret of his superiority lay less in the strength of his intellect and the astuteness of his counsels, than upon the use of "a lot of crack-jaw dictionary words and wise looks." There he had at one time three female Tasmanians and a half-caste family. This patriarchal group were much esteemed by the sealers.

The darker side of the picture came before the public at the close of the Black War, when arrangements were being made to exile the Aborigines to an island in the Straits, and when Mr. Robinson, armed with the Governor's authority, sailed among the islands for investigation of sealers' doings, and the rescue of the native women from their captivity. The earlier the period the more disgraceful the stories. Thus, we hear of wretches who boasted of shooting their women. A poor creature was being beaten, when, by struggling, she released herself from her tormentor, and fled. The fellow coolly took up his gun and shot her. Being afterwards asked why he beat her in the first instance, he simply replied, "Because she wouldn't clean the mutton-birds."

We have Mr. Robinson's authority for the statement that a wretched man, named Harrington, had stolen a dozen



women and placed them on different islands to work for him. Upon finding insufficient labour done, he would, upon his return, tie them to trees for twenty-four hours in succession, flogging them from time to time. He has been known to kill them in cool blood when stubborn to his will. Captain Stokes tells us of a brutal sealer who volunteered a passage of his autobiography:—"He confessed," says the Captain, "that he kept the poor creature chained up like a wild beast, and whenever he wanted her to do anything, applied a burning stick, a firebrand from the hearth, to her skin."

When the Government craft, belonging to Flinders Island, was lying off Circular Head, on the northern side of the island, a sealer's boat came off to it. In the stern was seated a young Aborigine of an interesting appearance, of mild features, but with a brow clouded by sadness. Neatly dressed, she was evidently better treated than most of her class; but the low tones in which she spoke, and the furtive glances she threw at the sealers, sufficiently indicated the terror under which she lived. A Black fellow from the ship began conversing with her, and urged her to fly from the Whites, and go to Flinders. Jackey, as she was called, was excited, but declined leaving the whale-boat. Lieutenant Darling was on board, and, guessing the reason of her refusal, gave her to understand that he had power from the Governor to take her from the sealers. As soon as she understood this, she bounded upon deck with a burst of joy. Another woman strongly censured her conduct, and went ashore with the sealers. But in the night she ran off, and came to the cutter with her little child.

Mr. Robinson gave a sad recital of his first Straits capture, the women of which party he carried to Gun Carriage Island, and who told their tales of the past to him. One spoke of having been stolen by the veteran Munro, another of being bought for some skins, while a third detailed her sufferings from the lash. Jock, or Ploic-ner-noop-per-ner, spoke of the way the sealers tied her up and beat her. Smoker was given up to the sealers by her husband, and that after she had given birth to several of his children. She had run away, was chased, taken, and severely flogged. It was with much difficulty Mr. Robinson succeeded in procuring some of them, as the sealers, aware of his errand, concealed them. Among



those thus taken were Kit, Sall, Judy, Mother Brown, Little Mary, Little Buck, &c. But he had positive instructions not to take the women away against their will. The sealers and the *Conciliator* were far from being friends. But he made a compromise with them. If they helped him to gather in the wild wanderers, he would allow them to keep the women they had. In his official report he declared that "the sealers are perfectly satisfied with the arrangements." Of course they were.

From the journal of Mr. George Washington Walker I make an extract:—

"From conversation with several sealers in the Straits, twelve of whom we have seen, and from the testimony of other persons, confirmed by that of native women who once lived with the sealers, but are now at the settlement (Flinders), we cannot regard the situation of the aboriginal females amongst that class of men as differing materially from slavery, unless the circumstance of one man having only one woman and living with her in a state of concubinage, and holding himself at liberty to abandon her when it may suit his own convenience, constitute the difference. The object of these men in retaining the women, most of whom, it is asserted, were originally kidnapped, is obviously for the gratification of their lust, and for the sake of the labour they can exact from them. In resorting to coercion in order to extort the services of these poor defenceless women, great cruelty appears to have been used by their unfeeling masters, with a few exceptions.

"At our request, a woman, named Boatswain by the sealers, with whom she lived some years, gave us some particulars relative to the treatment of the women amongst them. This she did partly by words, and partly by expressive signs that could not be misunderstood; and her statements were fully confirmed by other women who were present, and who had been similarly dealt with. She was requested to show in what manner they beat them. She then made signs of being stripped, stretched her hands up against the wall, in the attitude of a prisoner tied up to be flogged, making at the same time a doleful cry, and personating a flagellator in the exercise of his duty. After this she described a different scene. She represented a person striking another over the back and legs, and then herself as sinking down on the ground, while she repeatedly exclaimed, in a



piteous tone, 'Oh, I will clean the mutton-birds better,' until at last her voice seemed to fail through exhaustion. She said the men beat them with great sticks. When asked if certain men beat their women, she excepted four, the woman of one of whom was weakly, and would have died if he had beaten her. On her observing of one of the men that 'he beat his woman,' it was remarked, with surprise, that she had an infant. To this she replied, 'Yes, he beat her when the child was in her.' On inquiry being made, if she would go back to the sealers, she replied, in strong terms, that she would not, and the other women joined with her in making the same declaration.

"They appear to have made little or no progress in civilization, or in anything but what contributed to the pecuniary advantage or gratification of their masters. They have been even encouraged to perpetuate their barbarous customs. What, indeed, can be expected at the hands of men who, though nominally Christians, live in open violation of the gospel, and have little claim to the appellation of Christians!"

#### HALF-CASTES.

The subject of Half-castes is one of the saddest of the many dark stories in the history of the Tasmanians.

Some travellers have expressed themselves so strongly upon the repulsive characteristics of our Southern races, that it might occasion surprise to hear of association between their females and the strangers come from Europe. But, after the French portraiture of an *Ourâ Ourâ*, and the romancings of even some graver Englishmen, we may be prepared for the manifestation of some sympathy between the opposing colours. The rougher class of our people would be the first attracted, and the presentation of food, a fig of tobacco, or a gaudy dress, would occasionally melt the chaste bosom of a dark beauty.

The chastity of the dark races has been much, and most unjustly, impugned. We have incontrovertible evidence that many Blacks, especially among the Papuans, illustrate that virtue quite as much as the lighter and more civilized peoples. The fruits of concubinage are not to be envied any-



where. The experience and poems of Savage illustrate the sad tale. The sins of the fathers have been bitterly visited upon the children.

The Tasmanian half-caste if permitted to see the light, seldom lived long in the tribe. The mother, to conceal her shame, or repenting of her act, would often prevent the birth by abortion ; or, when unsuccessful, would destroy the infant upon its entrance into the world. If instinct led her to spare her child, the husband or brother might avenge the family wrongs by a fatal blow.

Dr. Story tells me that he never knew a half-caste in the tribe with which he was acquainted in Tasmania. So others have said of the wandering tribes. Even in Australia it was exceedingly rare to see a half-caste, at a time when children's laughter rang through the encampment. Then, as Mr. Schmidt, the Queensland missionary, found, "it was the rule to destroy the half-caste immediately after birth." Mr. G. A. Robinson and other Protectors said the same thing of Port Phillip. In more modern times, since a birth of any kind has become so uncommon a circumstance, the half-castes have been occasionally suffered to live, and have been even cherished with pride by the tribe. I have been several times pleased with the exultant satisfaction of the miserable remnant of a once mighty tribe at the yellow baby. Once, while admiring a very pretty specimen of the mixture in Victoria, a fine-bearded young fellow strode up smiling to me, saying, "That me piccaninny—you gib it tixpence." He then burst into a roar of laughter at his own assumption of paternity. But even these, as Mr. Protector Parker observed, disappear mysteriously at the age of puberty, if suffered to last so long.

To the honour of the Government of Van Diemen's Land, efforts were made to save the offspring of such connections. We read of a sawyer, one Smith, and his black friend, Mrs. Fanny Cochrane Smith, receiving twenty-five pounds a year for their half-caste child. Grants of land have been made to reputed parents, subject to the life of the offspring, or contingent upon the orthodox marriage of the mother. But the tribes have repeatedly avenged their honour by murdering the little one, whom they decoyed to their secluded haunts.

That which has excited most astonishment and disgust



has been the indifference of English fathers to the future being of their half-caste progeny. It can scarcely be pleaded in extenuation of their brutality, that gentlemen at home, admitted into the best circles, have been quite as heedless as to the future existence, or otherwise, of the fruits of their illicit intercourse with their own but poorer countrywomen.

Before the half-castes existed in any number, or when mostly confined to the sealers of the Straits, many benevolent individuals had a dim hope, amidst the rising horrors of the Black War, of the future utility of the half-castes. Could more be expected from the half-castes of the little island than from those of other parts of the world? It has been observed with pain, that, while in intellect they have been superior to the dark race, they were usually inferior to them in morals. How far this has arisen from unfavourable circumstances may appear in subsequent narratives. The Rev. George Taplin, the worthy missionary to the New South Wales Natives, once gave me this description of the Australian half-castes: "They are generally very bad and low, especially the women."

In Tasmania the half-castes were certainly never numerous under the most favourable circumstances. And yet Mr. Robinson, when depriving the sealers of their black companions, acknowledges that a large number of children remained behind, few coming off with their mothers. One woman had thirteen children by a sealer. Maryann, the wife of King Walter, assured me that her black mother had five by her white father. Captain Stokes counted twenty-five on Preservation Island and neighbourhood. But Dr. Jeanneret reported on Flinders Island, in 1846, forty-seven Natives of pure blood, and five of half-caste.

I have endeavoured to ascertain the number living, both of the first and second degree. The best reply to my inquiries came from Mr. Surveyor-General Calder, of Hobart Town. In November 1868 he sent me word that the total number then amounted to eighty or ninety. "This statement," he adds, "I make upon faith of a letter lately received by me from Captain Malcolm Laing Smith, formerly of the 78th regiment, I think, who interests himself much about them. They are stationed on some of the smaller islands of Furneaux' group, between, or about, Flinders and Cape Barren Islands."



My half-caste friend Maryann gave a pleasing account of her father and mother in their island homestead. Before removal to Flinders Island she had resided at Launceston, being conveyed there by her father to the care of a friend. Although she was of superior ability to most white children, and would, if more happily situated, have become a truly distinguished woman, she was thrown by officials among the degraded Blacks of the island, to her own serious moral and intellectual loss. Repelled in cold disdain by her father's blood, she clung to her mother's kind, and ultimately contracted a childless marriage with Walter George Arthur, the most intelligent and educated of the Native race. Her sister Fanny, many years younger than herself, married a European, upon some vicissitudes of virtue. After a marriage of five years, she gave birth to a child. The Government had made the pair a grant of one hundred acres of land, though not to be sold. Maryann had, at the time of her conversation with me, recently received a letter from her sister, stating that she was then living perfectly happy with her husband in Hobart Town.

A friend gave the melancholy account of a family of half-caste girls, all of whom but one had turned out badly, and died early from dissipation. Another instance was more favourable. A lady had taken a boy and girl under her care. They had not been related, but were ultimately married, went on a farm, and did well. There was known a Tasmanian half-caste couple living on the Victorian diggings.

Dr. Nixon, first Bishop of Tasmania, undertook a voyage to the islands of the Straits, on an episcopal tour, but with particular reference to the condition of the half-castes there. His notices of them possess much interest. He baptized many of them and their children, besides having the pleasure of uniting some in marriage who had long cohabited unlawfully. Full of sympathy for the mixed race, he was ready to see, if possible, a favourable side to their character, and foster in their minds a love for the truthful and good. In his interesting narrative of "The Cruise of the Beacon," he bestows a compliment upon one whom he describes as "the greatest lady" of his acquaintance. It is another corroborative testimony to the care exerted by some white fathers of this interesting race, who acted as old Adams of the Pitcairn.



islanders. His lordship says, "Lucy Beadon, a noble-looking half-caste, of some twenty-five years of age, bears the burden of twenty-three stone. Good-humoured and kind-hearted, she is every one's friend upon the island. High-minded and earnest in her Christian profession, she has set herself to work to do good in her generation. From the pure love of those around her, she daily gathers together the children of the sealers, and does her best to impart to them the rudiments both of secular and religious knowledge."

Although possessed of means, with which he could have comfortably resided in civilized society, her father preferred his rocky, storm-girt home on Badger's Island. His aboriginal wife and most of his children died before him, and were buried on Gun Carriage Island. In January, 1867, he was laid, at his own request, beside the remains of the Tasmanian mother of his offspring.

Having to christen a child at one place, the Bishop has given us a notice of the juvenile half-caste. "One of them," he says, "a boy of two years of age, was as magnificent a little fellow as I ever saw. His large, full black eyes, and finely-formed features, would have done honour to any parentage."

He writes with much feeling of his astonishment and pleasure at finding in most of these regions of storm, and among so rough a class, the observances of religion, and those of his own Church. In that ramble of 1854 he visited Gun Carriage Island, from which the sealers were originally driven by Mr. Robinson for a temporary home of his gathered exiles, and to which, upon the transfer to Flinders, they were permitted to return. There he conducted service, and afterwards tells his tale:—

"It was with a solemn sense of the privilege conferred upon me, that there, in that storm-girt hut, the winds and the waves roaring around me, I, as the first minister of God that had set foot upon the island, from the dawn of creation until then, commenced the humble offering of prayer and praise to that creation's Lord. . . . These simple half-castes, the last relics of the union of aboriginal women with the sealers, had taken the Prayer-Book as their guide, and did not set up their own rebellious wills against its plain injunctions. They were not too proud to kneel; their psalmody,



too, was correct, and touching in its expressiveness. There was a deep earnestness with which my half-caste congregation joined in the several parts of the service, that I should be glad to witness in the more educated and polished gatherings of Christian worshippers."

Some of the half-castes have been noticed as possessing uncommon beauty, and travellers, like Lieutenant Jeffreys and Captain Stokes, have been eloquent in their praises. The very beauty of the little things has, without doubt, been the means of sparing their lives awhile, even with the wild tribe. A writer of the year 1815 had a funny tale to tell of a pretty half-caste child, whom he observed in company with one of the Natives. Turning toward the man, he jocularly exclaimed, "That not your child—too white." The savage, ready at a joke, and willing to give a laughable turn to his partner's frailty, claimed the little one as his own, but excused its pale colour because "my *gin* (wife) eat too much white bread."

In the early days, a sealer of King's Island was drowned, leaving behind two pretty little half-caste girls and a boy. Some benevolent person, pitying the state of the children, made some representations to the Governor, and the *Gazette* appealed to the public on their behalf. Mr. Fairfax Fenwick took the boy, who soon, however, ran away from his guardian. Two maiden ladies, Miss Newcombe and Miss Drysdale, afterwards historical characters in the annals of Port Phillip, accepted the charge of the girls, and conscientiously performed their duty toward them. They were well instructed and religiously trained. Kitty was remarkably attractive in person; and, being taken by her friends to the new colony across the Straits, obtained a husband, and lived there respectably. I heard of her last removing with her husband to Ballarat. Her sister, the much-admired Mary, was more erratic than Kitty. After some changes, she settled down as the wife of an Englishman, and became the mother of a fine family. Few troubled themselves about the parental feelings of the sealer's partner, the black mother of these half-castes. Soon after her children had been forcibly removed from her, she fretted so much as to die of a broken heart.

One romantic story connected with this subject remains to be told. It is the history of Miss Dolly Dalrymple, the first



known half-caste of the colony, and so called from being born near Port Dalrymple, the port of the River Tamar.

Dolly was born in 1808. She was seen by Lieutenant Jeffreys in 1820, and described as "remarkably handsome, of a light colour, with rosy cheeks, large black eyes, the whites of which were tinged with blue, and long, well-formed eyelashes, with teeth uncommonly white, and the limbs admirably formed." She was then living with a lady and gentleman in Launceston who had undertaken her education and care.

Her mother, Bong, a genuine Tasmanian beauty, had been attracted to the side of a young sailor of the Straits. He is said to have been of respectable connections at home, but of "a wild and volatile disposition." Dolly was not her only child; and it is in relation to another that she experienced a remarkable adventure. As may be conjectured, the men of the tribe were angry with the Whites who had stolen their *gins*, but especially indignant against those of the female members who preferred the society of the opposite colour. Several instances are recorded of murders on this account. The known attachment of Bong to the father of her children marked her out as an especial object of their jealous rage.

One evening, the sealers' party having been to Launceston for the sale of skins and the purchase of supplies, and Bong to revisit her eldest child, the boat had been anchored about ten miles from town, and Bong took a stroll in the Bush with an infant at her breast. Unfortunately, she was seen and tracked by a bloodthirsty company of Aborigines. The child, the mark of her tribal crime, was dragged from her, and pitched remorselessly into a native fire. The mother, in a fury of parental feeling, tore herself from her murderous countrymen, rushed to the fire, extricated her darling from the flames, and darted off into the obscurity of the forest for safety. Loud were the yells of the pursuers, and eager the search for their victim. Aware of her inability to outrun the men, she very adroitly sought the covert of a dense shade, and lay down breathless with fear and anxiety. Unable to find her track in the dark, the fellows gradually returned growling to the camp-fire, and after threats of revenge disposed themselves to sleep. The watchful mother keenly marked their reclining, and hastened to renew her



flight, arriving at Launceston by the morning dawn. Her little one died in a few days from the burning.

It may be remarked, before leaving poor Bong, that, when the Conciliatory Mission was formed, she attached herself to the party, and proved of valuable service. Her vengeance for the loss of her baby was found in her labour of love for the redemption of her race from their forest miseries. Instead of recognizing the claims of family, when the Black War was over, Mr. Robinson harshly ordered her to be sent to Flinders Island, with the other Blacks, instead of permitting her to live with Dolly Dalrymple, or with another daughter whom she had in Launceston.

The handsome Dolly, as usual, was exposed to many temptations. We have no record of her Launceston career after twelve years of age, but may fear the effect of her beauty in a colonial period not celebrated for the virtues. History brings her before us in the midst of the Black War, when living at the Dairy Plains, as the companion of a stock-keeper named Johnson.

A man, called Cupid, having been speared by the Quamby Bluff tribe, ran for shelter to Dolly's hut. She had no sooner extracted the spears from the body of the wounded man, than the mob surrounded the place. Seizing a double-barrelled gun, she gallantly defended her fortress, and compelled her assailants to retreat with heavy loss of life. Particulars of the conflict are given elsewhere. It is sufficient to say that, in addition to other testimonials, she received a grant of ten acres in the township of Perth, and the Governor promised Johnson other ten acres, and a free pardon, he being then a convict, if he became legally married to the brave woman.

This was done, and the beautiful children she had were legitimized. She lived to bring up a family of girls, celebrated all over the country for their loveliness. One of them had perfectly white hair.



## NATIVE RIGHTS.

The apostolic Bishop Selwyn, a lover of the coloured race, had been deeply affected with the story of the Tasmanians; and, upon his appointment as Missionary Pastor of the Maories, became the resolute advocate of Native freedom. In 1847 he uttered these memorable words:—

“I am resolved, God being my helper, to use all legal and constitutional measures, befitting my station, to inform the Natives of New Zealand of their rights and privileges as British subjects, and to assist them in asserting and maintaining them.”

Who ever aided the Tasmanians in a knowledge of their rights, or in the vindication of them? Learned legal authorities, from Bacon, Puffendorff, downwards, had contended that cannibals were beyond law, and could legally be slain. Many still affirm that a hunting tribe have no right to the soil they refuse to till. Voltaire, when referring to the struggle for supremacy among French and English colonists in America, sarcastically observed, “They had quite made up their minds in one point, viz. that the Natives had no right at all to the land.” An Indian Sachem thus put the question:—“The French claim all the land on one side of the Ohio, the English claim all the land on the other side; now where does the Indians’ land lie?” Even Mr. George, who would take away the land from English owners here, would scarcely consent to give back his American acres to the Red man.

In the transfer of his country the Tasmanian, according to Count Strzelecki, “has been allowed no more voice than the kangaroo.” Still, Government declared in Proclamations that the Tribesmen were British subjects, and should be treated by the law on equal terms with the Whites. Was it so? Could they retain any portion of their country? Could they, if committing a fault, be tried by their peers? Would their evidence have any weight in a Court of Justice? Wisely and kindly did Spanish law make special provision to treat Natives as minors. English law made them, as the Aborigines said, “neither Black nor White.” They themselves had unwritten laws, definite and binding national customs; yet



these were scorned by our rulers, who took no pains to teach the wild tribes any better.

Governor Arthur, however, wrote thus in his despatch to the British Ministry in 1835 :—" On the first occupation of the colony, it seems a great oversight that a treaty was not, at that time, made with the Natives, and such compensation given to the Chiefs as they would have deemed a fair equivalent for what they surrendered."

When John Batman afterwards made a treaty with the Australians of Port Phillip, with substantial gifts as tribute, shouts of ridicule from authorities greeted the act.

The Aborigines are pronounced by the law of England to be without right or title to the land on which they had dwelt for ages. They are forced to be subjects of the Crown, yet without any rights as citizens. It was reserved for modern Christian civilization to advance and maintain a theory which ancient heathen philosophy would have declared inhuman and unjust.

#### CIVILIZATION AND MISSIONS.

Sympathy has been withheld from the Tasmanians, as now by many from the Africans, by the plea that they belonged to the *unimprovable races*. But under what circumstances were any improving methods ever adopted ?

This is not the place to speak of their origin and primitive condition. In the " Daily Life of the Tasmanians " the more scientific aspects of the question have been treated at large, and to that work the intelligent inquirer must be directed. The important argument of pre-existing civilization cannot be discussed in our limited space.

Advancing, as they had done, to a knowledge of fire, and cooking thereby, why had they not gone further in the path of progress ? William Buckley was an Englishman of the nineteenth century, who lived for thirty-two years with the Australian Blacks ; these never improved from contact with his civilization, as he was content to sink to their level. Does progress, then, only come from association with a power able and ready to impress others ?

Superior intelligence, unduly expressed, may be likened



to the light that gleamed on the face of Moses from the Mount, and did but blind the astonished beholder. Our own immeasurable distance above the condition of the savage crushes him with awe and self-abasement. Then, as with all lower natures, the loss of self-respect leads to drink and degradation.

What did Government for the Blacks before the war? Nothing. What did colonists for the elevation of the race? Nothing.

Then, when something was afterwards attempted, and on the so-called Mission settlements, only failure resulted. We sought to put our entire civilization upon them at once. They must clothe like us, eat like us, school like us, work like us, pray like us;—and all at the word of command. We treated them as marionettes. When we pulled the string, they moved; without the pull they were still. And then, forsooth, when they did not move of themselves, we pronounced them stupid and unimprovable.

Where was the motive for their advance? Food and clothes were given them at Flinders; why should they work? A childless race they then were; for whom should they toil? The people loathed their very lives. School lessons, catechizings in abstruse doctrines of faith, with long prayers and sermons, had no favour in their eyes. The well-meaning friends were shocked and disheartened at the failure; yet, instead of re-casting their own methods of training—an acknowledgment of their lack of wisdom—they joined in the cry of utter hopelessness of effort.

If there appeared no success on Flinders Island, with so great a display of zeal, with so liberal an allowance from the State, and with the Natives so completely in the power of the instructors, would there be the least chance of any progress in the wilds, with associations of the worst and lowest, with full exposure to the destructive fury of strong drink?

Still there were cases of success. Walter's achievements in literature have been already noted. A few did well under the *forced-bed* system. I have by me a sermon composed by one called Thomas Bruni. In that he tells his readers that God wrote the Ten Commandments with His finger, and that they were "lying at the brink of hell's dark door." An



ordinary English villager might not be able to compose so good a sermon, or so long a one. At any rate, outward observances on the island were hopeful. Public marriages, though somewhat out of date for the parties, pleased the guardians, and brought presents to the wedded pair. But the civilization was but skin deep. The learning brought no profit, since an educated Black always felt he was treated as a *Nigger* by the unlettered White.

As to religious teaching, they prattled as parrots. They read the Bible, they knew its history, they were skilled in dogmas, yet the life was untouched. Why should more lofty piety be expected from them than from our own church-going race? If, however, exceptions prove the rule, the Tasmanians could feel the power of a Presence for Good, and bow in heart and soul before the Invisible. Father Clark told me, with streaming eyes, of the happy death of some converts. In a letter I had, after parting from him, he thus referred to his work:—"Several have given testimony, in their own simple manner, that they knew for what purpose the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world. One of the last persons who died before we left Flinders, and who for more than two years had been correct and well-behaved, was in the habit of praying regularly; and, when suffering from disease which kept him awake at night, spent three nights in prayer when dying, and conscious he was so. His last words were, 'Lord Jesus Christ, come and take me to Thyself.' This was in the hearing of the greater portion of the people who are yet alive. He was a good man."

When the missionary spirit despaired of success among the adults, attention was turned to the young. Lord John Russell said in a despatch to the Governor, "The best chance of preserving the race lies in the means employed in the training of their children." Sadly enough, the little ones were to be taken from their parents, lest example operate against the lesson. I saw some of these sickly, limp-looking objects at the Hobart Orphan School for the offspring of the prisoner population. They stood apart from their white schoolmates, listless and weary. The teacher told me they could learn, though taking no interest in class-work. A few, a very few, returned to Flinders; the rest had an early grave.

But I knew several benevolent colonists who were civilizers.



Mr. T. H. Wedge gave a pleasing story of one he rescued in the north-west. Never having seen Whites before, it took some time to quiet the fears of the wild little fellow. "I did not allow him," wrote my informant, "to live with or associate with the servants, but had him to live with me in my tent. He accompanied me in all my surveying excursions, during which he always met with the greatest kindness from the settlers, and was allowed to sit at their table when I dined with them. His conduct was always correct and well-behaved, and would compare favourably with most European boys of the same age. On one occasion, when in Hobart Town, he was present at a mixed party of ladies and gentlemen. During the evening one of the gentlemen tried to persuade him to kiss a young lady in the room. He hesitated, and said, 'No good—no good,' meaning 'not right.' But having been importuned for some time, he watched his opportunity, went behind the lady, and gently touched the neck, and then kissed his fingers. Having acquired our language tolerably well, I was on the point of teaching him to read, &c., when the severe inflammatory attack of the lungs carried him off. He was faithful, and became very attached to me."

Mr. Dandridge, who was in charge at Oyster Cove, gave me some intelligence of Mathinna, a girl of singular beauty and mental capacity for an Aborigine. Attracting the notice of the benevolent and literary Lady Franklin, the child was removed to Government House, and carefully and kindly trained by her ladyship. Mathinna pursued her studies with diligence, and became almost accomplished. Her good looks suffered no deterioration by her change of life, but were refined by education and developed by art. The age of early womanhood found her attractive in mind and body. But for whom were these charms to bud? On whom could she bestow her affections, and preserve her virtue? Could she, who had been indulged in the drawing-room of the Governor, who had become used to the luxuries of civilization, be content to be the bride of ever so handsome a Black? Dare she hope to be the mate of an Englishman whose tastes and education were equal to her own? Her moral danger had been foreseen by her kind friends, and many a lecture had she received. But the wild pulses of the girl were speaking



too, and the very reading of her tasks had quickened the growth of love. When Lady Franklin went to England, Mathinna was sent among the Blacks, and had the squalid children of the tribe as her companions. With her developed nature, and her being cast down among the refuse of a White population, the consequences may be understood. In a short time she died at Oyster Cove, friendless and hopeless; but affording another opportunity for some to deplore the depravity of human nature, and to lament mistaken kindness to a degraded race.

When, in 1841, Mr. Robert Clark brought to my house in Hobart Town four Tasmanian youths, my feelings of the prospective civilization and happiness of the race were of the most buoyant character. The dear lads were so interesting and artless as to gain my heart. They were clean, cheerful, and intelligent. Dressed in comfortable, and even respectable, European attire, with their fine open countenances, their languid smile, their beautiful eyes, I could not recognize them as the sons of degraded savages. Their replies to my questions were given in such correct English, they read the Testament so fluently, and conversed so agreeably, that I was ready to proclaim their civilization from the very housetop. But when, over twenty years after, I saw a company, consisting chiefly of dirty, ignorant, drunken, and ugly old men and women, the last of the race, my sentiments changed most uncomfortably. I sighed for the lads that went childless to their graves. I thought of the dark-eyed maidens, all gone, after a miserable and barren life. I felt, amidst the chill of the present, a melancholy despondency seize me, and all hope of civilization for Aboriginal races seemed to die within me.

The last story to be brought forward, though relating to an Aborigine of New South Wales, is enough to depress the most sanguine worker. I give it in the words of my friend the Rev. G. Ridley:—

“Bungaree, who, after taking prizes at the Sydney College, speaking good Latin, and behaving as a gentleman in elegant society, returned to the Bush, and then entered the Black police, once said, in a melancholy tone, to Lieutenant Fulford (who repeated the remark to me at Surat on the Condamine), ‘I wish I had never been taken out of the Bush, and educated



as I have been, *for I cannot be a white man*; they will never look upon me as one of themselves; and *I cannot be a black fellow*, for I am disgusted with their way of living.’”

### DECLINE AND EXTINCTION.

In taking up this painful subject—the Decline of the Tasmanians—it would be impossible to separate that fact from the advent of the Europeans. The Indian Cacique spoke of his people as melting like snow before the sun, when the pale faces came. Our Aborigines have not been suffered simply to pass off and onward before colonization, but have been hurried in their departure; and this, not by the gifts from Egyptian impatience, but by the poison of contact, and the sword of destruction.

Not able to amalgamate with the European Colonists, the other unfortunate condition followed—*they perished*.

The Puritans of America were not alone in the belief that the Aborigines were a sort of Canaanitish people, who were doomed to be exterminated by the *peculiar people*. Even the missionary to the Blacks of New South Wales, Mr. Threlkeld, seems to find some comfort, in his natural astonishment at the rapid diminution of his charge, from feeling that it “is from the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” He utters this sentiment when standing in a colony originally constructed out of criminals from Britain, who were rapidly filling the land with their prosperous descendants!

The Tasmanians perhaps suffered less from strong drink than the Australians have done, because they were less social with the Whites. But every case I have examined into of, so-called, partial civilization has been one of misery from that cause. Whalers, stock-keepers, and sealers employed that agency for the accomplishment of their purpose with the Black women. The “Tame Mob” that hung about Hobart Town in early times were dissolute and drunken. The unhappy remnant at Oyster Cove deplored their exposure to that curse; and, while declaring their passion for the



excitement, spoke feelingly of the cruelty of subjecting them to its temptation.

Dr. Jeanneret thus wrote to me of their decline on Flinders :—"This was, perhaps, unavoidable under so sudden a change, from a life of hazard to one of comparative indolence, without precautions which experience alone could indicate. Many of them were aged. Several still suffered from the effects of their wounds, and few were prepared to adopt the means of graduating their exchanged position. The temporary necessity of resorting to a diet of salt provisions might also possibly operate prejudicially." He speaks of a pseudo-civilization "increasing an inherent tendency to pulmonary and inflammatory affections." What they suffered from imported diseases, as syphilis, who can tell !

One prominent exponent of their decline was the absence of children. From inquiry of the nine women at Oyster Cove, I learned that only two of them had ever had a child. One of the two had one child, and the other two children ; all had died many years ago. Upon my expressing my surprise, one said, with a burst of laughter, "What good hab him piccaninny?" Another, with better taste remarked, "What por? blackfellow, him all die."

But some, struck with the non-fertility of Australian and Tasmanian women, have supposed that some mysterious effect was produced by their intercourse with white men. Count Strzelecki advanced this theory respecting the dark-skinned female : "She loses the powers of conception, on a renewal of intercourse with a male of her own race, retaining only that of procreating with the white man."

Whatever the exceptions, births with Blacks, after intercourse with Whites, were, as a rule, unknown. While travelling through the volcanic country of Mount Gambier, I heard of an instance of a woman bearing a child to a young Black, after she had been delivered of two half-castes. Other examples have been mentioned to me. Addressing the Rev. Mr. Ridley upon the question, as he had had great experience among the Natives of New South Wales, he answers me, "In all parts I have heard it said that black children are never born of mothers who have given birth to half-castes." Dr. Milligan mentions an instance to the contrary—a



woman then at Oyster Cove, who bore black offspring after half-castes. Dr. Jeanneret assured me that he doubted the Count's notion.

To my interrogative of "Why did they cease having children?" I received the following reply from Dr. Story, of Swanport:—"The deaths at Flinders Island, and the attempts at civilizing the Natives, were consequent on each other. If left to themselves, to roam as they were wont, and undisturbed, they would have reared more children, and there would have been less mortality. The change to Flinders induced or developed an apathic condition of the constitution, rendering them more susceptible of the heats and chills attendant on their corrobories, inducing a peculiar disease in the thoracic viscera."

Mr. Solly, then Assistant Colonial Secretary, showed what like causes produced in Australia, saying, "Many of these poor black women used to prostitute themselves for clothes, tobacco, or 'white money,' and, in such cases, I question whether they would bear children any more than white prostitutes."

There is another side of this question. The female is not alone in defective virility. There never was a difficulty about children with Whites, even when black children in Tasmania were almost unknown. A case in Victoria may bear upon the subject. Thirty years ago I knew a native who was *knocking about* the settled districts, having a wife, but being childless. Then he was often intoxicated. After a long time I saw him again, both healthy and happy. He was under good influence, had kept away from town life, and was then working quietly upon his little bit of ground. He had regained his vigour, and with great glee held up a fine black child, that he took from its black mother, and claimed for his own.

Our Tasmanians suffered from heart sickness and home sickness. Mr. R. H. Davis, in his interesting notice, refers to their residence on Flinders, "where," says he, "they have been treated with uniform kindness; nevertheless, the births have been few, and the deaths numerous. This may have been in a great measure owing to their change of living and food; but more so to their banishment from the mainland of Van Diemen's Land, which is visible from Flinders Island;



and the Natives have often pointed it out to me with expressions of the deepest sorrow depicted on their countenances." Dr. Barnes was conscious of the same antagonism to his medical treatment, saying, "They pine away, not from any positive disease, but from a disease they call 'home sickness.' They die from a disease of the stomach, which comes on entirely from a desire to return to their own country." When the poor *gin*, with eager look and pointing finger, asked a gentleman if he saw the white, snowy crest of the towering Ben Lomond, then just looming in the distance, the tears rolled down her swarthy cheeks, as she exclaimed, "That-me-country."

When Governor Arthur wrote home about the terrible decline of the Tasmanians, even before the great conflict of the Line, and subsequent battle strife, Sir George Murray thus replied in a despatch, dated Nov. 5, 1830:—

"The great decrease which has of late years taken place in the amount of the aboriginal population, renders it not unreasonable to apprehend that the whole race of these people may, at no distant period, become extinct. But with whatever feelings such an event may be looked forward to by those of the settlers who have been sufferers by the collisions which have taken place, it is impossible not to contemplate such a result of our occupation of the island, as one very difficult to be reconciled with feelings of humanity, or even with feelings of justice and sound policy; and the adoption of any line of conduct, having for its avowed or secret object the extinction of the native race, could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the British Government."

It was too late to attend to the benevolent cry of Lord Glenelg, "Rescue the remnant!" It is noticed in the glens of Tasmania that the beautiful *Exocarpus*, or native cherry-tree, flourishes best beneath the shade of other forest forms. When the axe lowers its tall and graceful companions, it begins to sicken, as though bemoaning the loss of sympathy, and gradually decays. Thus was it with the Natives. The departure of some let the sun in too rudely upon the others, and they shrank in their sensitive natures, hastening to the shade of the tomb.

When I was at Oyster Cove I could not avoid, when



rambling through the Bush with King Walter George Arthur, asking a question bearing upon the departure of his people. I repented of my curiosity. His face became suddenly clouded, his eyes lost their lustre, his mouth twitched nervously at the side, he sighed deeply, and his very body seemed to bend forward. He slowly turned himself round, but said nothing. He looked like one oppressed with secret and consuming grief—as one without hope. He had no child. All his dark friends were childless, and were silently leaving him on the strand alone.

Notice after notice appears in the Hobart Town papers of the departure of the few I saw at Oyster Cove. Poor Patty died early in 1867. Wapperty was then dying, leaving but two others of the sisterhood alive. The last of the Straits Aborigines, known as Mrs. Julia Mansell, died in July 1867, on Sea Lion Island. She was sixty years of age. Her large family of half-castes were scattered through the group of islands. Her sealer husband, now sixty-four, survives his aboriginal partner. Walter has gone, and Maryann, his intelligent wife, has gone also.

One man remained, William Lanné. In October, 1864, the *Hobart Town Mercury* had this paragraph:—"At the last ball at Government House, Hobart Town, there appeared the last male aboriginal inhabitant of Tasmania."

How expressive, as applied to such a man, is the language of the talented and estimable Mr. Westgarth:—

"Behold him a wandering outcast; existing, apparently, without motives and without object; a burden to himself, a useless encumberer of the ground! Does he not seem pre-eminently a special mystery in the designs of Providence, an excrescence, as it were, upon the smooth face of nature, which is excused and abated only by the resistless haste with which he disappears from the land of his forefathers?"

When I went over on a visit to Hobart Town in 1867, William Lanney had just returned from a whaling voyage. Truganina had mentioned his being a sailor, when talking to me about "him such a fine young man." I therefore sought him. Once I caught sight of him, but he was too drunk to talk with. My friend Mr. Woolley then gave me



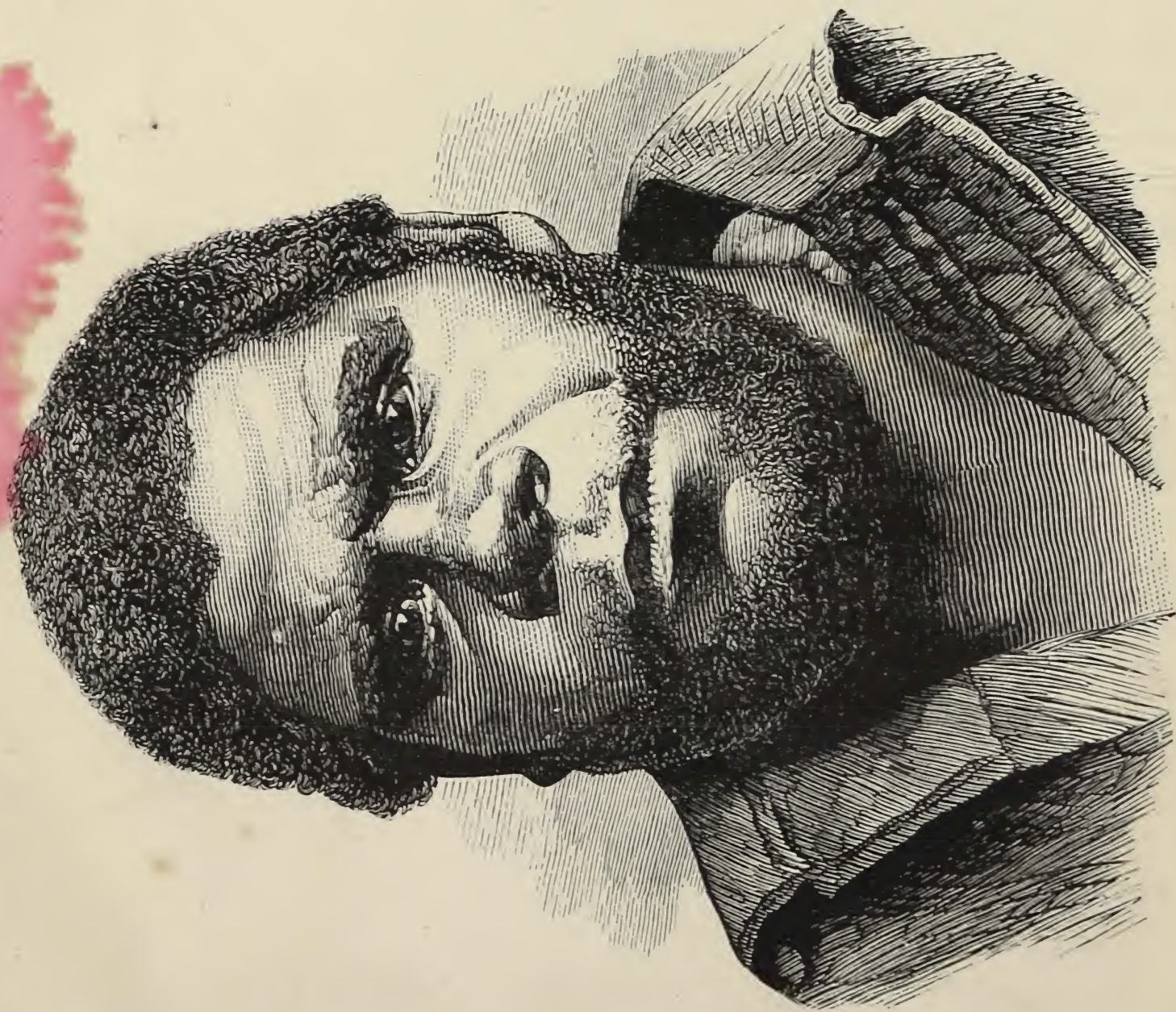






WILLIAM LANNÉ, THE LAST MAN.

(Photographed by MR. C. A. WOOLLEY, 1866.)



WILLIAM LANNÉ, THE LAST MAN.

(Photographed by MR. C. A. WOOLLEY, 1866.)



one of his excellent photographs of the poor fellow, a copy of which appears in this work.

William Lanney, Lanny, or Lanné, *alias* King Billy, the last man of the Tasmanian Aborigines, was, singularly enough, the last child of the last family brought from the island. He afterwards sojourned with his own people at Oyster Cove. Contracting an acquaintance with boatmen and sailors, he became a whaler, and for years sailed from Hobart Town. Jolly in habits, as well as in appearance, he was always a favourite with his fellow-seamen, and was received with enthusiasm by the old ladies of the settlement whenever he paid them a visit. As the youngest and handsomest of their tribes, they were loud in their praises of him to me. In January, 1868, clad in a blue suit, with a gold-lace band round his cap, he walked proudly with Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, on the Hobart Town regatta ground, conscious that they alone were in possession of royal blood.

A couple of months after this Lanné went whaling again. He returned in February of 1869, bloated and unhealthy. For several days he complained of sickness. On the Friday he was suddenly seized with choleraic diarrhœa, and his system, worn out with dissipation, was unable to bear up against the attack. The following day, March 3rd, he attempted to dress himself, with a view of proceeding to the hospital for treatment, but the exertion overcame him, and he fell dead on the bed. He was but thirty-four years of age.

The scandal attending his funeral, and the disappearance of his head from the hospital, though fully detailed in the "Last of the Tasmanians," cannot be repeated here. Dr. Crowther vainly applied to the Government for permission to send the skeleton to the London Royal College of Surgeons.

The last of her race, Truganina, or Lalla Rookh, has now gone after the Last Man. She died in May, 1876, and was supposed seventy-three years old.

The woolly-haired Tasmanian no longer sings blithely on the Gum-tree Tiers, or twines the snowy Clematis blossom for a bridal garland. Our awakened interest in his condition comes too late. The bell but tolls his knell, and the Æolian



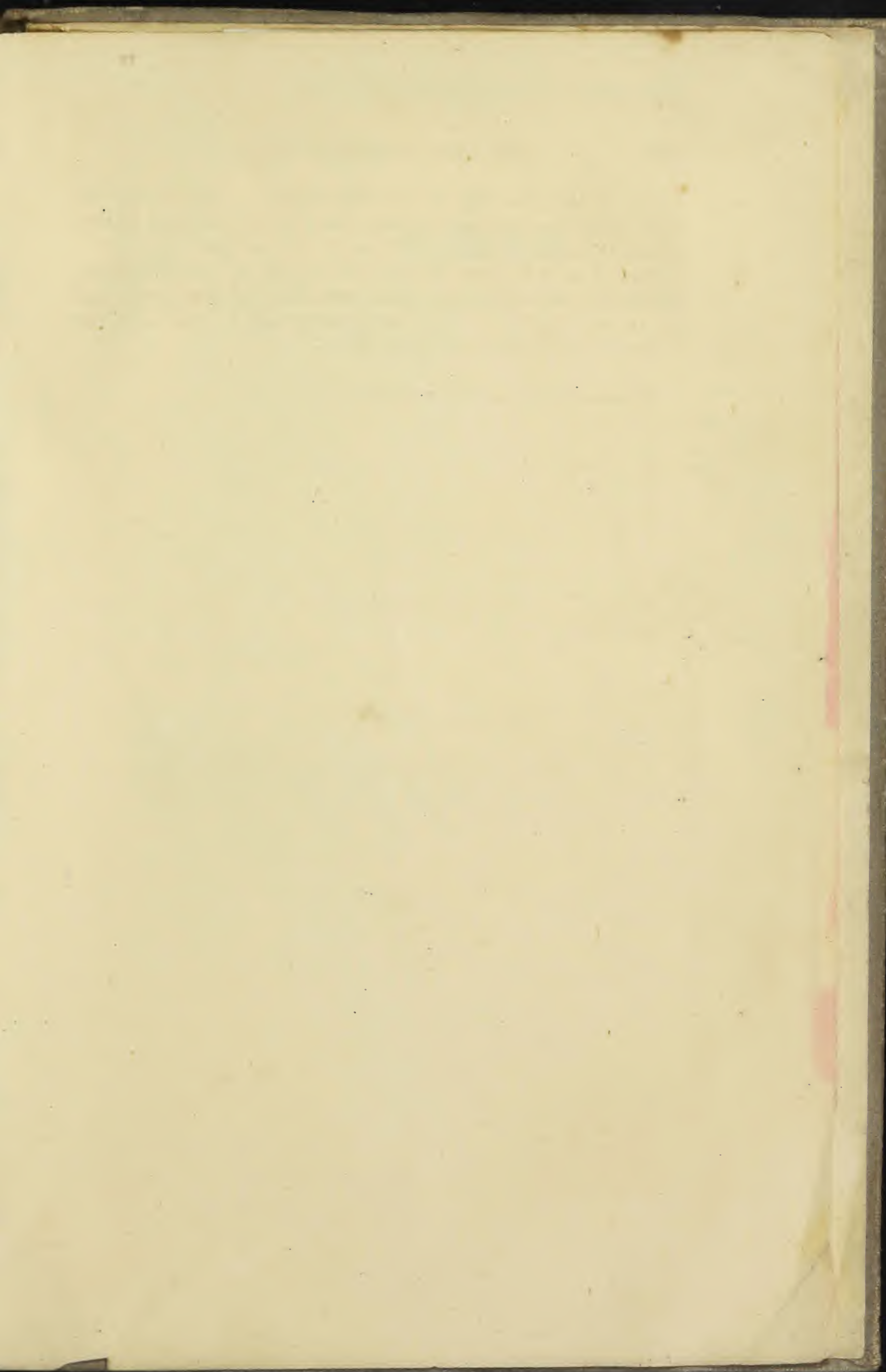
music of the She-oak is now his requiem. We cover our faces while the deep and solemn voice of our common Father echoes through the soul, "Where is thy brother?"

Oh! if he were here, how kindly would we speak to him! Would we not smile upon that dark sister of the forest, and joy in the prattle of that piccaninny boy! But now the burden of each saddened spirit is,

*Would I had loved him more!*

THE END.











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